



SIERRA
CLUB
ONTARIO

One Earth. One Chance.

Spring 2009

Sanctuary

Our Mission: To protect and restore the health of the natural environment, including human communities, by empowering the membership and citizenry through education, advocacy, action, and outdoor adventures.

SMALL STEPS TO A GREENER UNION

By David Kempton

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is a large trade union representing about 60,000 educational workers, with dozens of offices across the province. Over the past few years, it has begun to take on the challenges associated with reducing the environmental impact of its day-to-day business.

Running the business of the OSSTF requires many meetings, with OSSTF members coming from all over the province to attend. There

are committees and councils, our Provincial Council, our Annual General Meeting (called AMPA) and, of course, negotiations with boards of education and other educational employers. These meetings require a great deal of travel, a lot of hotel use and mountains of paper. The OSSTF's environmental impact is probably similar to that of a mid-size business.

In the spring of 2006, I took a resolution to the OSSTF Provincial Council, asking that our AMPA be

made carbon neutral as a response to climate change. Rather than talk about the science when presenting my resolution to Council, I put the science onto a single sheet of paper and distributed a copy to each councillor beforehand, for reference. That left me free to speak passionately about how disastrous climate change is in our far north, where I was born and, to a small degree, grew up. I connected us to the issue, both as educational workers concerned about

our students' future and as a socially involved trade union. I finished by pointing out that my resolution was a baby step toward reducing climate change, and that we would have to make difficult and fundamental changes in how we do business. The resolution passed unanimously.

The way these things generally work in the OSSTF, I was expecting the resolution to be taken to the next year's AMPA (2007) so that AMPA 2008 would be made carbon neutral. I was pleasantly surprised when the Provincial Executive really took it on, making AMPA 2007 carbon neutral and indicating that they wanted the organization to go much further, and find ways to reduce all aspects of the OSSTF's ecological impact. The executive researched the issue, and ended up purchasing the required carbon credits at a "Suzuki Gold Standard."

The Annual Action Plan from AMPA 2008 included the formation of a workgroup to produce a report with a series of >>> **page 4**

Front Door to the COTERC Caño Palma Biological Station. All travel is by boat along the canals and tributaries of the Tortuguero River. When water is high, the entire dock can be underwater for days at a time. No swimming, though, largely because of bull sharks and crocodiles. For story and additional photos submitted by Bernadette Zubrisky, see page 4.



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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

As we enter the warmer months of the year, please enjoy this wrap-up issue of *Sanctuary* for spring 2009.

Leading off this edition is an account by David Kempton of his work in helping to green a union. Along with the green theme, Bernadette Zubrisky describes her recent experience with the Canadian Organization for Tropical Education and Rainforest Conservation (COTERC) in Costa Rica (page 4). An additional green highlight in this edition is an account of Earth Week success by

Peter Orphanos (page 7).

On page 6, we draw your attention to 2 important notices: a call for nominations to the Chapter and Group leadership, and a notification on a change to the availability of paper copies of *Sanctuary*.

Many thanks to our diligent Editorial Assistants Jean Coburn-White, Theo Selles and Kat Tancock.

Best wishes for the summer,
Debbie Komlos

How to Submit to *Sanctuary*

While it is the intent of *Sanctuary* to print articles that reflect the position of the Ontario Chapter, ideas expressed in *Sanctuary* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Sierra Club. Articles, graphics and photographs are copyrighted by the authors and artists and may be reprinted only with their permission.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

All materials for publication in the **Summer 2009** issue must be received by the following deadline: **August 11, 2009**

SUBMISSIONS FORMAT

Please limit articles to 800 words; letters to 300. All submissions may be edited for clarity and length. Submit via e-mail and save files as "text."

WHERE TO SEND SUBMISSIONS

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Send changes to: Sierra Club Canada, Membership Services;
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CHAPTER & GROUP MEETINGS: All Chapter Executive Committee teleconference meetings are open to all members. Contact our Chapter office to find out how to attend. If you are interested in attending any other Chapter committee or local Group meeting, please contact the appropriate leader or call the Chapter office for more information.

DRAINING THE ONCE GREAT LAKES

Sierra Club volunteers do important work. We provide leadership, for instance, on critical issues like greenbelt protection and car free days. However, no task is more important than protecting and conserving fresh water.

Canadians are fortunate to live in a land defined by the greatest abundance of fresh water the world knows. Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario are called "Great" for a reason. They once were pristine. They teemed with natural abundance to the point where the first white visitors spoke of being able to walk into the water off Toronto and capture a feast of fish with their bare hands.

These lakes inspired philosophers to write about the sublime and the wild in a swoon of seemingly endless bounty.

Given that in the popular global imagination Canada is a land of glacier-fed streams and (relatively) clean water, it is hard to imagine the Great Lakes being great no

more—but it is a possibility. Just take a look at the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for an example of what havoc exploitative policies can wreak on a seemingly robust ecosystem. We like to think such destruction would never happen here—but we also thought the cod fishery would go on forever, and passenger pigeons, now extinct, were so plentiful that twentieth century people thought nothing of killing them because, after all, how could something that abundant become extinct?

The truth is, we are opportunistic creatures who rationalize just about any environmental travesty as long as there is a short-term dollar to be had, or an economic advantage to be gained.

To compound a bad situation, when it comes to the environment, time is our enemy, and not for the obvious reasons. No, time lets us forget what once was. Like the proverbial frog in a slowly warming pan of water, our condition is always relative to what we remember with accuracy. Since most of us seem to suffer from advanced Alzheimer's when it comes to remembering the natural environment, will that be frogs' legs, anyone?

That's why when the Great Lakes Compact was signed between provinces and states bordering the Great Lakes it seemed that rational thought and long-term preservation of natural resources might actually win the day. But the drought of 2006 made the centre of the country

GIVEN THAT IN THE POPULAR GLOBAL IMAGINATION CANADA IS A LAND OF GLACIER-FED STREAMS AND (RELATIVELY) CLEAN WATER, IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THE GREAT LAKES BEING GREAT NO MORE—BUT IT IS A POSSIBILITY.

think twice about not touching the Great Lakes:

Vegetation was faring worst along the Missouri River through North and South Dakota, but below-average vegetation conditions stretch across parts of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, north-western Nebraska, and Minnesota as well. The plains

of Canada's Saskatchewan and Manitoba provinces were suffering drought, too.

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=6907>

The drought of 2006 swept across North America's Great Plains, sucking water from the soil and threatening to bring back the "dirty thirties" or worse to the world's supposed bread basket (or is that now the world's ethanol tank). Just take a look at a map of North America. Turns out that Wisconsin borders Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. Guess which state was at first unable to ratify the Great Lakes Compact—but ultimately did? You guessed it. With all that water just sitting there they ask why should their farmlands

have to go without?

You can hear the future trumpeting now when climate change further dries up the Prairies. "This is a national emergency." "We must have the water for short-term relief." "The have states must share with the have-nots."

I have no doubt that's what the bureaucrats managing the Aral Sea once said. But since they are all dead now, who is to know—or care? It is in the past, just like >>> **page 7**

Chapter Director's Column

Dan McDermott

THE GREEN ENERGY ACT—A GLASS HALF FULL

The McGuinty government has a unique talent for raising environmental expectations and then dashing them. I know this all too well. My first Sierra Club campaign called for Ontario to stop burning coal to generate electricity. Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty got the message and ran with it all the way to the Premier's office. The delivery date for that promise has now been extended twice and one can be forgiven for doubting if the current deadline of 2014 will be met.

So it is with some trepidation that I now sing the praises of the Ontario government's Green Energy Act. If Premier McGuinty delivers on all that the Act promises, green energy in Ontario is about to be transformed from its current boutique status to that of a significant and expanding part of the province's energy mix. The Act contains much that is praiseworthy and progressive, needs improvement in some key areas and sets Ontario on a collision course with its commitment to nuclear expansion.

To start with the positive, the Green Energy Act will ensure that wind and solar have an assured place on the grid with a pricing structure that encourages investment. Feed-in tariffs are part of the plan that should guarantee basic financial support for green power. One quibble is that this progressive tool for establishing a fair price for green energy is left to ministerial discretion as the Act is currently written.

Even with this caveat there are already signs that the Act is being received as a positive driver for Ontario to become a North American leader in the rapidly emerging market for green energy technology and hardware. The recent announcement of a solar equipment manufacturing facility opening shop in Kingston will hopefully be the leading edge of Ontario's emergence into the economy of the 21st century.

One gap that the Green Energy Act does not close is Ontario's frustrating reluctance to grasp the simple wisdom that the cheapest, most efficient and environmentally sustainable source of power is the electricity we don't use. Indeed, we have not moved much beyond the legitimization of the clothes line as an acceptable technology in our province. Not long ago the City of Toronto offered to be the Ontario leader in energy conservation in exchange for the provincial government scaling back the >>> **last page**

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>>> **from page 1 (Small Steps)** checklists to help individual OSSTF districts and bargaining units take on the challenge of being more environmentally sensitive. I was happy to serve as part of that workgroup. We tried to lead by example by using a wiki as an online meeting place, car-pooling, choosing meeting places based on reducing overall travel and distributing the final report electronically rather than on paper.

The report was released in March at AMPA 2009. Its title, “Small Steps to a Greener Union,” reflects our approach. Environmental problems such as climate change can seem overwhelming, so we have suggested many small, practical things that offices can do in their normal day-to-day operations. There are checklists for better use of paper and energy, food and water, meetings and conferences, transportation, electronics recycling and other issues. The full report was never printed for distribution, but is available for all on

the Federation website. Go to osstf.on.ca, click on **Publications**, and find the report by title or simply put the keyword “greener” into the site’s search tool. In a supporting move, there is a new budget line through which the provincial treasurer can support local OSSTF offices in projects to reduce their environmental impact.

There’s more to this story than just reducing our environmental impact. It’s also an illustration of one of the most wonderful aspects of trade unions like OSSTF—the power of one person to make real change. For a great many workers in all fields, unionized or not, environmental concerns are paramount. If you are in a union, or have friends who are, then you should be able to help that union to reduce its environmental impact. You can start small, with passion, and bring about change.

I hope to bring occasional progress reports to you.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

By Bernadette Zubrisky

Sometimes even I forget that the Sierra Club is an international environmental organization. In fact, it is North America’s oldest and largest. Sometimes it’s easy to get so absorbed in our own local environmental campaigns that we forget about the many other issues that citizens worldwide are working on. I’d like to take the time for this edition of *Sanctuary* to write about what other people elsewhere are doing to help the planet.

Over the March Break I took advantage of a once in a lifetime opportunity and visited some friends in their new place in Costa Rica. Earlier this year, they decided to take time out from the rat race and hectic pace of life in the “Big Smoke.” They sold their house, quit work and moved south for a year to live in Tortuguero National Park, in the lowland rainforest on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. The focus of their experiment is to monitor sea turtle populations through the Canadian Organization for Tropical Education and Rainforest Conservation (COTERC). They have developed an educational website called “Destination Conservation” that provides information and updates on their daily life and activities in the rainforest. They, Karen and Josh, have two young kids who also moved down to Caño Palma Biological Station. Liam and James both contribute to the D.C. project and provide photos, photo ops and a few words of wisdom through blogs, videos and links on the site.

It was an amazing trip because I got to visit friends and see the project, as well as travel to a place that



Above: The author holding on to the tail of an Eastern Caribbean Coral Snake that Josh Feltham has contained in a snake observation chamber. This was Josh’s first catch of the species. Before it was returned to nature, the snake was photographed and measured. **Below:** View from the upper deck of the biological station’s front dock. Being so far into the rainforest, this is typical of what you see all around you—green! The two most prominent themes of Tortuguero National Park are the views of the jungle and the dark waters of the canals.

I’d never even thought about going to. My son and I stayed at the Turtle Beach eco lodge and visited the D.C. crew daily. We explored the rainforest and system of canals both through the lodge’s guides and with our friends. I was able to make many more ecological connections about my own impact on the tropical rainforest. Driving through the countryside showed me the impact of my coffee habit. Traditional coffee plantations are bare and lifeless compared to the rainforest that they replaced. A small step such as purchasing only shade grown coffee can make a big difference for biodiversity, bird habitat and hence their survival. I’m on to shade grown now!

The biggest connection I made was how interconnected habitats are. In order to really protect species, we need to protect habitat at both ends.

Ovenbird, though still fairly widespread, are being spotted less frequently because large blocks of Carolinian Forest are increasingly fragmented across Eastern North America. The Costa Rica connection for Ontario birds is huge and includes many of the birds we commonly find here in the summer—various Warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Baltimore Orioles to name a few. The list goes on.

I really needed to experience this connection to get the full perspective. Visiting the tropical lowland rainforest is an experience I will never forget. When I hear the word rainforest now, I can envision the



I saw many species of birds, such as the Chimney Swift, wintering in Costa Rica. Species that have lost much of their habitat in Ontario are threatened and endangered. Up to 90% of habitat loss is because of urban sprawl and the development of sensitive and important ecological areas. Even species such as the

damp and darkness as well as the myriad of species that call it home. I even remember—with a sort of fondness rather than the sheer terror I first felt—what it feels like to walk right into the web of a Golden Orb Spider! After all, this was as much a learning experience as it was a fun and easy vacation, >>> **page 5**

THE MONEY TREE

SAVING MONEY & THE PLANET



Interested in Low Interest Rates?

With the Bank of Canada's target overnight lending rate at or near an all-time low of 0.50% interest, many Canadians are likely considering how they may be able to take advantage of this opportune time. The Bank of Canada's "overnight rate" is the interest rate at which major financial institutions borrow and lend one-day funds among themselves. It's the cost of borrowing money by our major banks; it's not the interest rate which we, as Canadian consumers, may obtain loans, but it does affect our cost of borrowing. At 0.50% interest rate, it stands to reason that the Bank of Canada doesn't have much leeway to cut interest rates any further. For all practical purposes, we can consider this period as offering record low interest rates.

Interest rates most commonly affect Canadians' home mortgages. Let's use the Bank of Montreal's mortgage rates as an example: their Prime Lending Rate was 2.25% as of June 8. This is the interest rate that they would theoretically provide to their "best" customers. "Best" is those who pose the lowest credit risk, and the least likely to miss a mortgage payment or default on the mortgage altogether. By comparison, if we look at their posted mortgage rates, the Bank of Montreal is currently offering a closed 5-year Variable Rate of 3.05%. If we look at an equivalent 5-year closed Fixed Rate, they are offering 5.45%.

Whether you are more comfortable with having the lower interest rate available in the Variable Rate mortgage, or whether you prefer the surety of having a Fixed Rate mortgage is usually an item of personal preference. Basically, the bank will hold the interest rate steady for you on a Fixed Rate mortgage, but that comes with a higher interest rate up-front as compared to the Variable Rate mortgage. My opinion on the subject is that our banks have entire departments of

highly knowledgeable people dedicated to calculating interest rate spreads to ensure that they make money on their Fixed Rate mortgage offerings. This means that the chances of us, as the "uneducated" general public, to pay less interest on a Fixed Rate mortgage compared to a Variable Rate mortgage are slim to none.

Many Canadians seem to hold the philosophy that during periods of low interest rates, they can pay less mortgage correspondingly with the lower interest rates. The problem with this way of thinking is that the principal that they borrowed remains intact and, in the future when interest rates go back up, they are then forced to make larger payments to correspond with the higher interest rates. If they reverse that thinking and make larger mortgage payments during periods of record low interest rates, then that would reduce the amount of their principal and hence when interest rates go up in the future, they could make smaller payments, if needed. This is probably best illustrated using a simple example.

If you take out a \$100,000 mortgage at 5% interest rate today and you chose to make interest-only payments, then your annual payment would be \$5,000. But since you didn't pay down any of your principal amount, it remains at \$100,000. Next year, if the interest rate grows to 10%, then your interest-only mortgage payment would double to \$10,000. In comparison, if in the first year you made \$10,000 in payments, then you've covered your \$5,000 in interest, plus you paid down your principal by \$5,000 to reduce it to \$95,000. Then the next year, your interest on a \$95,000 mortgage at 10% interest is \$9,500.

One fact that is little known to many Canadians is that the interest paid on loans that we take out for the purpose of earning an income is tax deductible. This appears in our

personal income tax filing on Line 221, "Carrying charges and interest expenses." The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) guide states: "You can claim the following carrying charges and interest you paid to earn income from investments." It further elaborates by stating that it includes: "Most interest you pay on money you borrow for investment purposes, but generally only as long as you use it to try to earn investment income, including interest and dividends. However, if the only earnings your investment can produce are capital gains, you cannot claim the interest you paid."

This means that the interest that you pay on any money you borrowed to invest in a business is deductible from your personal income taxes. It doesn't matter to the CRA whether you choose to use the money to purchase stocks of a company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange or whether you use the money to start your own business. Just make sure you keep track of the interest rate on the money that you borrowed to make the investment and you can deduct it from your personal income taxes.

For those who can afford the risk, with interest rates being at the historical record lows, there is no better time for Canadians to invest than today. Regardless of whether you have your own business idea or whether you have a stock investment in mind, the ideal time to borrow the money to invest is now. The Bank of Canada has recently indicated that they do not intend to start to raise interest rates until the middle of 2010. So, dust off all of those business or investment ideas and take a new look at it! And if any of your ideas are "green" ones, that's all the better!

Philip Shyu

>>> **from page 4 (Global)** sitting back in the jungle boat watching and waiting for creatures to appear or be pointed out by the experienced eco-guides! The snakes and spiders are equally at home in the rainforest as the Blue Morpho Butterflies and orchids. Respect must be given to all creatures that call the tropical rainforest home.

It's great to see that other people are making the connection between what we do at home and what happens around the world. We truly are one ecosystem. I'm grateful to have had this opportunity to see another part of the world that, although miles away, I feel deeply connected to. While I drink my shade grown coffee and look out the window at the bird feeder, I am sure to see birds that may have just returned from or might be heading back to Costa Rica.

RUN FOR ELECTION TO A LEADERSHIP POSITION!

Sierra Club Ontario (SCO), the Ontario Chapter of Sierra Club Canada (SCC), is seeking persons with a broad range of experience to run as candidates in the 2009 election for the positions on the local Group or Chapter Executive Committees (ExComs). SCO, and each of its local Groups (Ottawa, Peel Region, Toronto, and Niagara Region Section-in-Formation) each seek several candidates to run in this year's election.

What is an ExCom?

A Group or Chapter ExCom is responsible for general guidance of the Chapter or local Group's affairs to ensure the fulfillment of the mandate of SCC.

Who Can Run?

Candidates must be members in good standing with SCC, and at least 18 years of age. Chapter candidates may live anywhere in Ontario. Group candidates must live within the Group boundaries.

What Skills and Experience Do You Need?

SCC seeks to build a diverse leadership from individuals with conservation, financial, fundraising, communications, membership and outings experience. Some past governance experience with SCC or other organizations is an asset.

Desirable Skills and Experience Include:

1. Effective listening and communication
2. Knowledge of environmental and political issues

3. Dedication to SCC ideals
4. Commitment to consensus-building and teamwork
5. Strong organizational skills and self-motivation
6. Knowledge of or desire to learn about SCC's organizational and environmental concerns

Commitment of ExCom Members

All members of an ExCom are expected to devote sufficient time and energy to projects and carry them through to completion. Commitments include regular meetings and regular communication via e-mail and/or telephone.

ExCom members should also be willing to assist with existing or *ad hoc* committees such as the membership, fundraising, outings, marketing or conservation committees.

The Nomination Process

There are two ways to be nominated as a candidate for ExCom elections:

(1) The Nominating Committee may nominate interested persons. Members may send a personal profile to the Chapter office at the e-mail address listed at end for the committee's consideration, or may suggest to the Nominating Committee a person for its consideration; or

(2) A person may petition to run for election. Any 15 members of SCO (for Chapter candidates) or the local Group (for a particular local Group) may submit a signed letter nominating a willing member and that person will be included on the ballot.

Petition candidates must provide a 100-word personal profile to the Nominating Committee for inclusion on the ballot.

Dates and Deadlines

Deadline for submission of names for consideration by the Nominating Committee is September 1, 2009; for petition candidates, petitions must be submitted by September 1, 2009. Elections will occur by mail-in ballot in the fall. Executive Committee members-elect will take office at the first meeting of the year in January 2010.

Contact the Nominating Committee

For more information, to submit a 100-word personal profile and resume, or for information on how to run by petition please contact:

Christine Elwell, c/o Emma Cane:

ontariochapter@sierraclub.ca

* make subject "SCO ExCom Nomination"

Please indicate which executive committee the nomination or petition candidacy is for: SCO Chapter Executive, Niagara Region Section-in-Formation, Ottawa Group, Peel Region Group or Toronto Group.

NOTE: The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Saturday, November 21, 2009: Time & Place to be announced.

Dear Sierra Club Ontario Members:

Some scientists have predicted that unless significant measures are taken on a worldwide basis, by 2030 there will only be 10% of the Earth's original forest cover remaining with another 10% in a degraded condition. Moreover, 80% of global forest cover will have been lost, and with them hundreds of thousands of irreplaceable plant and animal species.*

It is with this ominous projection in mind that Sierra Club Ontario (SCO) has made the prudent decision to discontinue all non-essen-

tial mailings. This comes in response also to your concerns as members about paper waste.

SCO's policy on paper use is to use only sustainable source products, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. We also use 100% post-consumer recycled paper in our office as well. We remain strong in our commitment to the responsible use of paper products and, effective immediately, will only be mailing paper (from 100% recycled sources) for essential Club processes, such as Club elections.

All of our publications will be

available for download at our new website (update your bookmarks!): **www.sierraclub.on.ca**; you will also be able to sign up for e-mail notifications when the SCO newsletter is available here.

We understand that some of our members live in remote areas without Internet access, or do not have access to a computer or e-mail. For these members, we are offering to send you paper copies of our publications for a fee of \$20 for 4 issues, mailed quarterly.

If you are interested in still receiving paper copies, please phone

SCO Coordinator, Emma Cane, at 416-960-9606 to make your credit card payment, or mail your cheque to:

Sierra Club Ontario
24 Mercer St.
Toronto, ON M5V 1H3

Please make your cheque payable to "Sierra Club Ontario"

Thank you for helping us fight deforestation and promoting the responsible use of paper products.

**Emma Cane, Coordinator
Sierra Club Ontario**

*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deforestation#cite_note-Wilson-74

Earth Week Planting: A Successful Partnership

On April 18, about 80 volunteers came to the banks of the Credit River in north Mississauga to plant 500 trees.

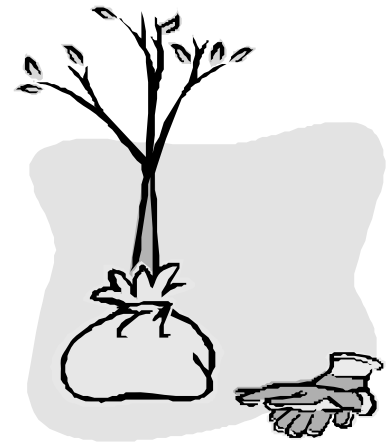
Among the volunteers, were our MP Bonnie Crombie and Councillor George Carlson. We were honoured to have David Culham, former Mississauga councillor and the champion for the Credit River Valley for decades, planting trees with us beside the Culham Trail, which was named in his honour.

This event was a model for partnerships. Our Sierra Club Peel worked side by side with the City of Mississauga, Credit Valley Conservation and the Credit River Anglers Association to produce a

well-organized and very successful event. Not only did we not increase the Earth's carbon sink, but we also had fun chatting with others and meeting new friends. This partnership is a long-term one that will see more than 10,000 trees being planted within a decade.

Our appreciation goes to all the hardworking volunteers who planted 500 trees within two hours and in a small, but important way, made our community and our world a better place.

**Peter Orphanos, Chair
Peel Region Group
Sierra Club Ontario**



Earth Week Tree Planting 2009. Volunteers in Mississauga, Ontario. Photo: Peel Region Group

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



We are unique amongst national and international environmental organizations in that volunteers are truly us. Our volunteers head committees and campaigns, partake in research, teaching and advocacy, and participate in events. Numerous opportunities exist to make a difference while learning valuable skills through practical experience.

Volunteering opportunities with the Ontario Chapter of Sierra Club Canada tend to be local or general (often spanning several local sites). Prospective volunteers are requested to become members of Sierra Club Canada. If you're not a member yet, please become a member! Every member, active or not, is a valuable and powerful addition to Sierra Club Canada.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: **E-mail:** ontariochapter@sierraclub.ca; **Tel:** 416-960-9606; **Web:** <http://sierraclub.on.ca/index.php/site/volunteers/>

>>> from page 3 (From the Chair)

the cod. You can imagine what might happen if first one state then another begins to siphon fresh water from the Great Lakes.

How long will it be before that same water finds its way to the aquifer-depleted states of the Southwest if the only thing people remember is that we divert water to feed cropland?

Scenarios like this one illustrate the value of the Sierra Club's long history, not to mention its capable volunteers. Our institutional memory spans three centuries now. We do not forget what once was and what might be again.

Sierra Club Ontario members play a key part in the ongoing protection of the Great Lakes watershed. They do it without a lot of fanfare and without compensation—except for the satisfaction of knowing they protect a resource that has lasted thousands of years and can last thousands more. We need help, though. Get involved. Contribute to our work. Your effort will make a difference.

>>> **from page 3 (Chapter Director's)**
Portlands gas-fired generating plant. The McGuinty government said no. Another huge opportunity was lost during Ontario's most recent revision of the building code. The developers by and large got what they asked for and new homes continue to be energy inefficient.

These concerns and shortcomings can be relatively easily fixed. Not so easily remedied is Ontario's irrational addiction to nuclear expansion. Insanity has been defined as engaging in the same activity repeatedly and expecting a different outcome. By this measure, Ontario's continuing love affair with nuclear power clearly qualifies as insane. The

Ontario Power Authority has ignored years of meaningless construction schedules, outrageous cost overruns and unexpected reactor breakdowns. The McGuinty government also has turned a blind eye to these issues, and continues to parrot the assurances of nuclear agents that new reactors will be problem free and the past should be forgotten.

Green energy advocates have noted that governments can either commit to soft path energy or nuclear expansion. There is simply never enough money to do both. Now this observation is being put forward by the nuclear lobby as it views with alarm the growing commitment of governments to green energy. Concerns are being voiced that too much

green energy could impinge upon nuclear profits. In this perverse world view the absolute primacy of nuclear must be assured and all other methods of keeping the lights on must conform to this absolute.

Sierra Club's overarching concern is that the Ontario government's newfound support for green energy is on a collision course with its commitment to nuclear power. The inflexibility of nuclear power plants doesn't make it possible to simply dial them down when less electricity is needed. The government also has contractual commitments to purchase power generated by Bruce Power owned nukes. This "nuclear first" focus has the potential to become "nuclear always" policy. In fact, one retired Ontario Hydro official recently wrote a column carried in the *Toronto Star* that asserted that wind power should have no place in the Ontario energy mix. The logic being that fossil fuel fired generators are more flexible and therefore more compatible with the nuclear priority.

Sierra Club congratulates the McGuinty government on the bold and forward-looking initiative that is the Green Energy Act. We remain concerned that the government has not come to grips with the reality that nuclear expansion and green energy are incompatible cohabitants. The day will come when the Ontario government will need to choose between these competing priorities. Sierra Club strongly urges the McGuinty government to make the choice now to stop throwing good money after bad and invest in the green energy future that must quickly become our present.

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