



School of the Environment  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## **ROBERT HUNTER MEMORIAL LECTURE**

4:10 p.m., THURSDAY APRIL 14, 2016

Room ES 149(basement), Earth Sciences Building, 5 Bancroft Avenue

### **JOHN BENNETT**

Senior Policy Adviser Friends of the Earth Canada and  
former Executive Director of Sierra Club Canada

### **DAN McDERMOTT**

Ontario Chapter Director of the Sierra Club of Canada Foundation

## ***The Environmental Movement, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow***

**ABSTRACT:** Environmental campaign veterans Dan McDermott and John Bennett will discuss the environmental movement and their involvement dating back to the 1970s when their personal interactions with Bob Hunter and Greenpeace set them on a path of life-long activism. They will share some of their personal experiences with Bob's mind-bombing approach to environmental activism, but often have very different perspectives that can lead to lively discussions. Mr. Bennett and Mr. McDermott were part of, or associated with, most of the environmental achievements of the last 40 years: nuclear power, whales and seals, acid rain, old-growth forests, ozone depletion, climate change, and recently the Greenbank and the decline of pollinators. They have been in the streets with placards canoed and parachuted into nuclear sites, climbed smokestacks, and disrupted an election campaign. They have also sat in boardrooms with business executives and across the table from prime ministers and premiers. Their knowledge and experience has caused them to ask:

- Has progress been made?
- Are those who say the environmental movement has failed correct?
- And what's next? What should the next generation of activists take on and how should they do it?

**BRIEF BIOS:** *John Bennett* is now a Senior Policy Adviser with Friends of the Earth Canada where he is pursuing his campaign to save the bees he launched while serving as Executive Director of Sierra Club Canada. He has served in several capacities with Sierra Club Canada since 1998 including Executive Director, Atmosphere and Energy Campaign Director, and Senior Policy Advisor. One of his responsibilities during this period was developing the Climate Action Network in Canada where he served as Executive Director for several years. He also worked very closely with the Sierra Club (U.S.) on the automotive fuel economy campaign. Mr. Bennett has long history of campaigning on energy and environmental issues dating back to the 1970s when he co-founded the first Greenpeace office east of the Rockies. He launched Greenpeace's first nuclear power campaign by leading a trio of Greenpeace activists who canoed into the Bruce Nuclear Power Plant to prove it lacked security. He also served as Greenpeace Canada's Atmosphere and Energy Campaigner and led Greenpeace International's Oil Campaign. Mr. Bennett was asked to take on the role of Communications Director for the Green Party of Canada during the 2008 federal election campaign former SCC Executive Director Elizabeth May who now leads the Green Party of Canada. The Greens won nearly a million votes - the only party to increase its total.

**Dan McDermott's** forty year career as an environmental activist began with an early 1976 meeting to establish a Toronto support group for Greenpeace. Support quickly turned to direct involvement. One year later the first Toronto Greenpeace office opened. In March, 1977, Dan joined the second Greenpeace campaign to oppose the annual east coast seal slaughter. He was one of five people, including expedition leader Paul Watson, to volunteer to hold down the Greenpeace camp on the island of Belle Isle in the teeth of a blizzard. During his sixteen years with Greenpeace Dan parachuted into the Darlington construction site to oppose nuclear power, climbed a smokestack in Michigan to protest acid rain and organized and coordinated numerous actions and campaigns, His last Greenpeace campaign achievement was to establish the organization's international fisheries campaign in Newfoundland in cooperation with the Newfoundland Inshore Fisherman's Association. Dan subsequently coordinated Earthroots' campaign to preserve old growth pine forests and later worked with the International Fund for Animal Welfare, again, on the sealing issue. In 1998 he organized The OntAIRio Campaign to phase out coal fired electricity generation in Ontario. OntAIRio was an alliance of Sierra Club Canada, the Toronto Environmental Alliance and the David Suzuki Foundation. OntAIRio's work led to the signing of the Ozone Annex to the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement. In 2000, Dan became Chapter Director of Sierra Club's Eastern Canada Chapter and is currently Sierra Club of Canada Foundation Ontario Chapter Director. His principle campaign work focuses on strengthening and expanding Ontario's Greenbelt and preventing the deterioration of the Great Lakes.

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