

THE

ACTIVIST

biannual update for
members + supporters



FALL 2020

CHAPTER ACTIVITY

ATLANTIC

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has lagged behind other provinces in establishing protected areas, currently protecting only 6.9% of the province. Newfoundland and Labrador is not doing its part to support the Pathway to Canada Target 1, which aims to protect 17% of Canada's land and freshwater by the end of this year. That's why the Atlantic Chapter is submitting comments in support of the new proposed plan, A Home for Nature: Protected Areas Plan for the Island of Newfoundland. You can learn more [here](#), as a Newfoundlander, Come From Away, or invested Canadian.

This month, the Atlantic Chapter has supported locals in Cape Breton where there is an opportunity to extend a Nature Reserve. We sent a letter to the Government of Nova Scotia recommending that an adjacent property that's currently up for sale and development be purchased and protected out to the Northumberland Strait.

IN THIS ISSUE, WE'RE COVERING:

- **WHAT'S HAPPENING IN EACH CHAPTER**
- **YOUTH ACTIVISM AT COP25**
- **GOOD ENVIRO NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

In consultation with climate change experts, our Chapter and the SCCF National Programs Director have submitted comments on the Bay du Nord Development Project for deepwater oil and gas production. We need an investment from governments in a green and just recovery, not more and riskier oil and gas developments!





Fall splendour in Quebec

ONTARIO

TRYING TO BE PLASTIC-FREE!

Ontario Chapter promoted a Plastics-Free July. This challenge was a month-long online event providing tools to reduce plastic pollution and push for much-needed policy change. We had 140 participants take the challenge. In addition to educational information and virtual movie screenings, we had petitions to the provincial government and templates developed for supporters to use to ask their local stores to reduce unnecessary plastic use. These were popular resources and many of them are still available [here](#).



AIR QUALITY IN O-TOWN

In partnership with Ecology Ottawa, Sierra Club has an exciting project underway in Ottawa, where, using volunteers (and perhaps city councillors or their staff), we will be measuring the air quality in each of the city's 23 wards. Is air pollution a serious problem in Ottawa? Consider this: While Ottawa's air pollution is not considered poor globally, it does cause some 500 premature deaths every year. That will likely be similar to the number of deaths from Covid-19 in 2020. Find out more [here](#).

QUEBEC

A VICTORY DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

This past spring, two of Sierra Club Quebec's co-chairs officially signed on to support the vision upheld by the Quebec Environmental Law Centre/Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement (CQDE). This document was signed by 124 fellow environmental and justice groups to ask instead of the "Projet de loi 61" to invest in the provincial ministries related to the environment as incentive to help restart our economy.

"Projet de loi 61" was presented as an innocent effort to restart Quebec's economy, but instead, it aimed to soften environmental regulations and permit the realization of projects without – or with far fewer – environmental constraints. This would have permitted expropriation of land and put aside social and environmental concerns for the sole benefit of an existing list of projects made by the CAQ government. Such efforts, the CQDE's included, led to the CAQ abandoning Projet de loi 61. The Quebec Chapter continues to monitor the situation to ensure that similar deregulations do not come into effect.

And long-time activist and environmental historian, Dr. John Bacher has been doggedly following the development of some Southern Ontario sites, notably in the Niagara Region. He is frequently published on our website and has educated our members on illegal logging and procedural violations. His series of articles on Thundering Waters Forest in Niagara has led to letter-writing campaigns and petitions – no doubt confounding the bad actors in the region. Read some of John's articles about the special place known as Thundering Waters in his article "[Great Healing Forest and Waters](#)."



PRAIRIE

THE LIVING ROOM

The Prairie chapter is excited to share their newest community project, the Prairie Living Room, in Winnipeg, MB! During quarantine, our living rooms have become the only place some of us have been safely allowed to go. The Living Room Initiative's goal is to create living versions of the indoor spaces we have spent so much time in these past months. The Prairie Living Room creates a blend of nature, art, and everyday human life. These are outdoor places that invite people to pause, stay a while, and enjoy local naturescapes together. Art and green technologies (such as solar lights) collide to bring interactive elements to this greenspace. This installation has been a tool to promote prairie native species in Winnipeg and created a space for learning about native wildflowers, biodiversity and pollinators.



SAFE LAUNCH OF FOREST SCHOOLS

The Wild Child program of Prairie Chapter is thrilled at the successful, safe launch of Forest Schools in the Edmonton Area despite COVID-19. Forest School Summer 2020 programs enabled 64 children to play in a natural environment and foster relationships with the natural world. This project provided a total of seven programs, with a total of 960 hours spent outdoors while following health guidelines. The Forest School programs met in three unique areas in Edmonton and Sherwood Park, allowing children to build a relationship with the land, to one another, and to themselves.



YOUTH ACTIVISM AT COP25 STANDS OUT AS HIGHLIGHT

SIERRA YOUTH CHAIR DETAILS THE DISAPPOINTMENTS, DISTRACTIONS AND ULTIMATELY THE DETERMINATION OF YOUNG ACTIVISTS AT MADRID CONFERENCE

In December 2019, current outgoing Sierra Youth chair Megan Sutton travelled to Madrid to attend COP25 as the sole attendee representing Sierra Club Canada Foundation. "As someone who has been studying climate change policy for a long time, it was amazing to go to COP," says Sutton.

The 2019 event underwent a last-minute venue change from Chile to Spain due to growing unrelated protests in the original host country. The scramble to execute the conference at a new venue provided apt foreshadowing to the conference's ultimately disappointing results, as COP25 became the longest on record after negotiations stalled on numerous fronts and protests erupted in and outside of the venue. "I think it was a disappointment for anyone involved. The atmosphere was tense," says Sutton, describing her arrival at the conference for the second week of unsuccessful negotiations.

During the second week, peaceful protests broke out at the venue in reaction to the stalled negotiations, after which hundreds of protesters were removed - with little indication if or when they would be allowed to return. Sutton, who had been a part of these peaceful protests, was attending the daily Canadian Briefing, led by Minister of Environment & Climate Change Jonathan Wilkinson, when the question period was interrupted with the news that observers had been shut out of the conference.



"I think youth represented themselves the best they ever have. But there's never been such youth involvement in COP, and it was very prevalent that youth were signifying to everyone at COP that they weren't just going to stand by anymore," Sutton says, describing the youth involvement at the protests.

The next day, most of the observers were allowed to return. Despite the lack of progress and general tension of the event - the youth delegates were leaders in progress and action. "The energy and commitment brought by Greta (Thunberg) and the youth present stood in stark contrast to what was going on policy-wise," says Sutton.

“Youth activism was the best and most hopeful part of this conference. Where negotiations fell short, youth were the ones who took action and made headlines.”



GOOD ENVIRO NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Tahlequah (J35) and her infant calf J57
photo: Katie Jones/Center for Whale Research

- Mother Orca who carried her dead calf in a “tour of grief” gave birth to a healthy calf!
- No need to choose between protecting birds or wind energy – painting wind turbines blades black is confirmed to decrease bird deaths by 70%.
- Nanotechnology has found a way to create new energy sources...through bricks!
- Denmark is working to pass a law where Parliament can force a government party to step down if they are not meeting climate targets.
- In Costa Rica, seven hectares of overused cattle fields have now been successfully restored to a forest booming with wildlife and diversity after 36 years.
- Red kites are thriving in England once again since their reintroduction 13 years ago.
- Greta Thunberg to donate one-million-euro humanitarian award prize to organizations dedicated to fighting climate change.

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO: *WHY TIME OUTDOORS IS CRUCIAL TO HEALTH, EVEN AMID A PANDEMIC*

"Cities have a limited amount of space, so we need to be creative about how we're going to get the green space in. ... Having more trees—simple changes like that can preserve the good social connectivity of cities, while providing enough green spaces for mental and physical health.

If we can get people interacting with nature more in larger cities, then you'd have a more mentally healthy city population as well." [Read more.](#)



Greenspace and walking paths in Halifax



Be a
Hiking Hero
for our
planet!
FALL 2020

NATIONAL HIKE for the ENVIRONMENT

FOUNDATION
 SIERRA
CLUB CANADA
FOUNDATION

ARE YOU READY TO BE A HIKING HERO?

Anytime this Fall, get out and enjoy a fall hike, and help raise important funds to protect the planet.

Simply pick a date to "take a hike" - on a mountain, on a favoured walking trail, or even around your neighbourhood - just make some time to hike, walk, wheel or stroll and help raise funds for Canada's only national grassroots organization fighting every day to protect our beautiful planet.

IT'S EASY:

**1. SIGN UP AS AN INDIVIDUAL
OR AS A TEAM.**

**2. 10X10 - ASK 10 FRIENDS TO
SPONSOR YOU FOR \$10 OR MORE.**

FIND OUT MORE [HERE](#) AND SIGN UP!



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