

review

News from the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

New approaches needed to improve environmental quality of Canadian cities: Round Table report

Solving the problems that plague Canadian cities – urban sprawl, traffic congestion and smog – will require the leadership and active engagement of all levels of government, the private sector, and community-based organizations. The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) released a *State of the Debate* report on the potential role of the federal government in improving city life at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Annual Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba on May 30.

Ottawa's policy influence on cities' development is largely unintentional and often runs counter to sustainability objectives. The new report, *Environmental Quality in Canadian Cities: The Federal Role*, concludes that environmental quality would be improved by federal fiscal policies that address urban development patterns, transportation and energy use.

"The federal government could demonstrate leadership and make a tremendous positive contribution to the health and wealth of our cities by coordinating its tax and spending policies using an environmental

focus," said Michael Harcourt, NRTEE member and Chair of the Round Table's Urban Sustainability Task Force.

More Canadians are living in cities. Environmental quality is an important element of the overall quality of life. Furthermore, urban environmental quality plays an important role in attracting and retaining the talent that drives wealth creation.

"Urban environmental quality can be greatly improved

through federal fiscal policies that address the interrelated issues of transportation and energy use," said David J. McGuinty, President and CEO of the Round Table.

The report urges Ottawa to collaborate with other levels of government on environmental issues through strategic investments in transit and municipal



Sustaining Natural Capital by Recognizing Its Economic Value: NEW from the NRTEE

Clean water and pristine land are increasingly being valued as a natural form of capital that has economic value. This recognition provides a new incentive for nature conservation, according to a recently released *State of the Debate* report entitled *Securing Canada's Natural Capital: A Vision for Nature Conservation in the 21st Century*. In this report, the Round Table proposes a practical

conservation strategy that combines ecological and economic decision-making and gives rural and Aboriginal communities a say in management decisions.

"Society has to ensure that conservation of natural capital on behalf of all Canadians brings social and economic benefits to the people on the front line," explains Terry Duguid,

Continued on page 3

• **New NRTEE Members**

• **Environmental Quality of Canadian Cities – Upcoming Information Sessions**

NRTEE Publications Brochure Inside



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Upcoming Information Sessions – *Securing Our Wealth: Investing in the Environmental Quality of Canadian Cities*

Canadians interested in improving the environmental quality of Canadian cities will have an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the new report. The National Round Table invites municipal leaders and community stakeholders to participate in half-day information sessions entitled *Securing Our Wealth: Investing in the Environmental Quality of Canadian Cities*, to be held in the autumn of 2003 and early in 2004 as part of a seven-city national initiative.

Also on the agenda is *Cleaning up the Past, Building the Future: A National Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy for Canada*. This report, released by the NRTEE in February of 2003, provides a blueprint for action on redeveloping Canada's "brownfields."

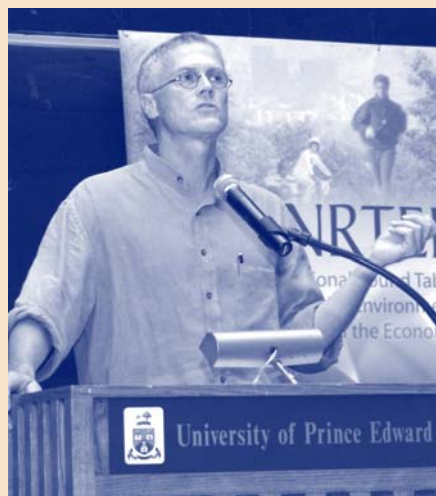
"Brownfields" are urban contaminated sites, such as decommissioned refineries, empty railway yards, abandoned gas stations or former drycleaners. Redevelopment will provide both economic and social benefits: new jobs and economic activity and an increased tax base, on the one hand; and reduced health risks, revitalized neighbourhoods, and more efficient urban development on the other.

Improving the quality of Canadian cities will require the leadership and active engagement of all levels of government, the private sector, community-based organizations, and individuals. Participation in this national initiative is an important first step.

The upcoming fall information sessions will be held in Calgary on September 30; Vancouver on October 29; and Winnipeg on November 4, 2003. Information sessions will also be held in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto in the new year.

For exact dates and/or more information, please see the insert or visit the NRTEE's Web site at www.nrtee-trnee.ca **b**

Conserving Natural Capital: Paul Hawken and the National Round Table in PEI



The NRTEE's members met in Charlottetown, PEI in August. As part of the NRTEE's quarterly meeting, a public lecture featuring environmentalist Paul Hawken was held on the evening of August 13. Mr. Hawken spoke to an audience of over 200 people on *How Can Natural Capital Be Protected – What Is Needed?* The event was co-hosted by the NRTEE, the University of Prince Edward Island and the Government of PEI.

The next day, the National Round Table hosted a half-day workshop on environment and economy issues in PEI. Speakers included the Honourable Patrick Binns, Premier of PEI, Paul Hawken, Harvey L. Mead, NRTEE Chair, Terry Duguid, Chair, NRTEE's Conservation of Natural Heritage Task Force, and Ron Colman, Executive Director, GPI Atlantic.



Left to right, Dr. Harvey L. Mead, NRTEE Chair, Paul Hawken, the Honourable Patrick Binns, Premier of PEI, and David J. McGuinty, President and CEO, NRTEE.

Quality of Canadian Cities, continued... infrastructure. The report recommends that Ottawa combat urban sprawl by investing \$1 billion a year for 10 years to support transit in growing urban regions. Funding should only go to those municipalities committed to land use policies that support transit use.

"... the best fiscal measures for improving urban environmental quality are those that affect urban form, transportation and energy use."

– *Environmental Quality in Canadian Cities: The Federal Role*

The report also recommends that the federal government take immediate action to put its own house in order. As the nation's biggest

employer and landlord, its actions have a significant impact on the environmental quality of Canada's cities. As well, Ottawa should adopt a more ambitious, targeted approach to greening its vehicle fleet.

The federal government can also demonstrate leadership by encouraging the private sector and individual citizens to make more efficient use of energy and land. Among the report's recommendations are fiscal incentives for individuals who invest in energy efficiency renovations on their homes or who purchase new dwellings built to the R-2000 standard. Other incentives should be provided in support of green infrastructure projects such as water and sewage treatment plants, renewable energy generation and community energy systems.

For ordering information, please see the publications catalogue. **b**

Sustaining Natural Capital, *continued...*
Chair of the Conservation of Natural Heritage Task Force.

Three top priorities are identified in the report. The first priority is the need for all levels of government to honour existing conservation commitments. As promised at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the federal government should establish 10 new national parks and five national marine conservation areas, while restoring the ecological integrity of existing parks. These and other commitments will require additional funding.

“It is only by working together – as governments, industries, communities, Aboriginal peoples and others – that we can secure our natural capital for our own and the world’s benefit.”

– *Securing Canada’s Natural Capital: A Vision for Nature Conservation in the 21st Century*

As a second priority, the report urges the federal government to invest \$250 million in a National Conservation Fund, modelled on the existing federal-provincial infrastructure program, and to encourage the provinces, territories and conservation community to match that investment by a target of 3:1. A third priority is the establishment of an independent, multistakeholder Conservation Council to monitor progress in implementing the report’s recommendations and to report back to the Prime Minister within 18 months.

Parks and protected areas are reservoirs of natural capital, including environmental services like clean water and pollination, and environmental goods such as lumber and DNA. They are the basic building blocks of conservation, but by themselves are not enough.

Conservation planning needs to take whole landscapes into account. Much of the conservation of natural capital should take place on our working landscapes where agricultural, logging and mining industries operate. While continuing to pursue eco-

nom ic development opportunities, we need to create buffer zones and connecting corridors in the working landscapes around parks and protected areas to adequately conserve our stocks of natural capital, including our biodiversity wealth.

The private sector has a key role to play in nature conservation.

The Round Table recommends that federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments identify and remove key policy barriers to voluntary stewardship by resource industries. For example, companies that voluntarily surrender areas of high conservation value should not be penalized by “use it or lose it” requirements, nor should these areas be reallocated to other companies. Similarly, support should be provided to farmers who invest in conservation equipment or who operate under an Environmental Farm Plan.

The report also recognizes that conservation efforts must respond to the needs of local communities and Aboriginal peoples by emphasizing their roles as stewards of nature, and by working to ensure that nature conservation brings them social and economic benefits. Rural and Aboriginal communities should benefit economically when asked to be the caretakers of Canada’s natural capital while pursuing traditional resource extraction activities.

Aboriginal people should be directly involved in planning and participating in the parks establishment process and should have preferential access to business opportunities on the edges of protected areas that are in their traditional lands. A national sustainable tourism strategy would enhance the economic benefits to all communities near protected lands.

“A long-term conservation strategy will only work if local communities buy in and support it. There is an indispensable role that the people of our rural communities could – and indeed must – play if we are to conserve natural capital, thus preserving the economic options of future generations,” said David J. McGuinty, President and CEO of the Round Table.

Securing Canada’s Natural Capital also identifies marine ecosystems as a priority area of conservation. The report recom-



NRTEE Welcomes Four New Members

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy is pleased to announce the recent appointment of four new members by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

Keith Stoodley is Director, Marketing and Sales, with Lotek Wireless Inc., a Newfoundland and Labrador-based environmental company focused on the application of telephony and miniature electronics for fish and wildlife tracking and monitoring. Mr. Stoodley has extensive experience in marine issues, especially as regards environmental preservation, business development and trade.

Dr. David V.J. Bell, from Ontario, a political scientist by training, is currently a Professor in Environmental Studies at York University and Director of the York Centre for Applied Sustainability, which he founded in 1996. Dr. Bell was the writer and host of *Sustainability: Canadian and Global Perspectives*, a series of 12 radio broadcasts, and acts as an advisor to governments at the local, provincial and national level.

Alfred Pilon, a member of the Bar of Quebec, has over 25 years’ experience in policy development, communications and negotiations. He is presently a manager and consultant analyst in the field of organizational development and is serving as an arbitrator lawyer with the firm Groupe Option Médiation.

Wendy L. Carter, an executive with over 25 years’ experience in both the public and the private sector, is a member of the Law Society of British Columbia and the Canadian Bar Association. Her current work focuses on the voluntary sector and the creation of supportive and productive work environments. **b**

Capital Markets – Program Update

Can sustainable activities benefit business or capital markets? The NRTEE's new Capital Markets program will explore the links between sustainability and financial performance in Canada. Chaired by Round Table member John Wiebe (President and CEO, the GLOBE Foundation of Canada) and the Round Table's Vice-Chair, Patricia McCunn-Miller (Vice-President, Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, EnCana Corporation), this policy research initiative will be of interest to a variety of audiences including

government, private sector corporations, large institutional fund managers, labour and environmental groups.

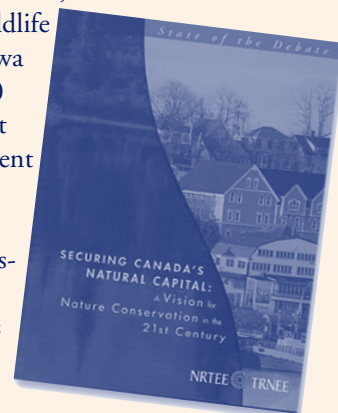
The Capital Markets program, which is expected to last two years, seeks to stimulate strong, neutral and independent debate among multiple stakeholders. Its findings and key policy recommendations will be published in a *State of the Debate* report.

For more information, contact **David Myers**, Policy Advisor
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Sustaining Natural Capital, continued...

mends that Ottawa should complete a network of 35 marine protected areas, marine conservation areas and marine wildlife areas by 2010. Ottawa should allocate \$500 million over the next five years to implement Canada's Oceans Strategy. Through these and other measures, Canada can regain its position as a global leader in nature conservation by 2010.

For ordering information, please see the publications catalogue. **b**



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