

Suzuki praises Green Energy Act

By David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

The word sustainability gets bandied about a lot, but what does it mean? It means living within the productive capacity of the biosphere. We survive because our most fundamental needs – clean water, fresh air, soil, energy from the sun (through photosynthesis), and resources like trees, fish, and so on – can be replenished by nature as long as we don't exceed its ability to replace them. Nonrenewable resources like metals must be used carefully and recycled because, no matter how plentiful they are, they will be depleted.

The current economic difficulties, a deepening ecological crisis, and energy problems provide an opportunity to radically reassess our current status and direction. Energy especially provides a chance to re-think our course. Fossil fuels are nonrenewable, which means that once we use them they're gone and won't be replenished within humankind's existence.

The major sources of gas and oil are in politically volatile areas like

Science Matters

By David Suzuki



Russia, Africa, and the Middle East. And the rate at which we are burning fossil fuels exceeds the biosphere's capacity to reabsorb the carbon. Nuclear fuels are also nonrenewable, and their use in nuclear power plants generates radioactive wastes that will have to be stored for millennia. The global threat of terrorism adds to the dangers of this energy source.

Energy sustainability demands that we shift from dependence on nonrenewables to renewables like solar, wind, geothermal, tidal, wave, and biomass. Energy efficiency and conservation will be important parts of that shift. It's an inescapable fact. And so, will we continue to deplete the nonrenewables and face the disastrous consequences of climate change and radioactive waste, or will we embark on a crash program to get onto renewables? The choice seems clear.

It's no surprise that many of the advances in clean energy – technological and economic – have come from areas that don't have many fossil-fuel deposits, and that some of the roadblocks have been from areas with large fossil-fuel reserves. Canada is among the latter. We have large supplies of uranium, coal, and oil (albeit the dirtiest oil) in our tar sands.

Given that our governments are elected for four- or five-year terms, it's almost forgivable that those in power often focus on what we already have over what we could be developing. But "almost" doesn't mean it is forgivable. These people are elected to represent our interests, and it certainly isn't in our interests to continue to rely on diminishing supplies of polluting fossil fuels for energy or for economic growth.

It would be one thing if the politicians continued to support the fossil-fuel industry while serious-

ly considering ways to make the transition to clean energy. But some of our elected officials seem determined to keep on sucking or digging every bit of oil, coal, and uranium out of the ground until it runs out or until humans are decimated by the consequences of climate change or nuclear contamination – whichever comes first.

But not all of our representatives are blind to the possibilities. While our federal government puts so little stock in renewable energy that it was conspicuous by its absence at the launch of the International Renewable Energy Agency in Bonn, Germany, in January, the Ontario government is getting behind a Green Energy Act proposed by the David Suzuki Foundation and a number of other organizations.

The stated vision behind Green Energy Act proposed by these organizations is "To make Ontario a global leader in the development of renewable energy, clean distributed energy and conservation, while creating thousands of jobs, economic prosperity and energy security, and protecting the climate."

In announcing that his *Continued on Page 3*



RESTORATION: Ron Birrell and Bill Sanford, along with several other Heritage Acton volunteers, spent last Saturday continuing to work on restoring the historic Acton Town Hall on Willow Street so it can again be a centre for a variety of community events. - submitted photo

Fairy Lake study...

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obviously, I think it's of very great interest to try to maintain that. The encroachment of weeds in the lake itself as well as the avian population that surrounds the lake are aspects that are being undertaken," Zukovs said.

He said later this year there would be a joint public meeting to present the information from the Fairy Lake study as well as progress of the Black Creek subwatershed study.

Councillor Somerville pressed him on the timing for release of the Fairy Lake study, and while Zukovs said they are just part of a partnership working on the issue, he repeated Somerville's suggestion that it was a "definite maybe" the report would be ready and added that he's "ever hopeful."

Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary asked about plans to repeat a harvest of weeds that are choking the lake and Zukovs said he'd have to check with the study team to determine what was planned to deal with the weed issue.

Mayor Rick Bonnette noted that it cost \$10,000 for five hours of weed harvesting on the Boathouse side of the lake eight or nine years ago, and the whole

lake was dredged about 20 years ago.

John Kincaid, director of water resources at Credit Valley Conservation said the Black Creek subwatershed study will help develop a plan to intersect land use and population growth, and balance that with maintaining and potentially restoring the existing natural heritage.

Kincaid said he hopes a number of things come out of the study – things that could be incorporated into the Town's and Region's planning – including protection and enhancement of subwatershed water resources and ecological functions. The study findings will help guide and use designations and development policies and encourage and guide private landowners in stewardship of natural resources.

Within the Credit River watershed there are 22 subwatersheds, including subwatershed 10 that encompasses Acton, a small part of Georgetown and the Town of Erin.

Along with land use and planning, the study of the Black Creek watershed is also looking at water quality, hydrogeology, restoration, fish, habitats and terrestrial species.

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