

## ECONEWS #213

EcoNews is a free monthly newsletter, funded by your kind donations. It dreams of a world blessed by the harmony of nature, the pleasures of community, and the joys of personal fulfillment, guided and protected by our active citizenship.

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<i>The Money</i>	March	April	May
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Donations	\$575	\$1168	You?
Advertising	\$75	\$50	
Balance	\$380	\$476	

### THE ECO-PERSONALS

\$1 a word. Max 5 lines, non-profits, low-income free. 1" box ad \$50

\* **Lovely room to rent**, close to ocean, downtown, cooking facilities, \$35/night, weekly and monthly rates 250-382-3810.

\* **Unused letter-sized envelopes** still needed for EcoNews. Guy, 881-1304

\* **The Bluff Box**: your weekly dose of Metchosin-grown organic produce, pick-up in Fernwood. Starts June. <http://bluffbox.blogspot.com>

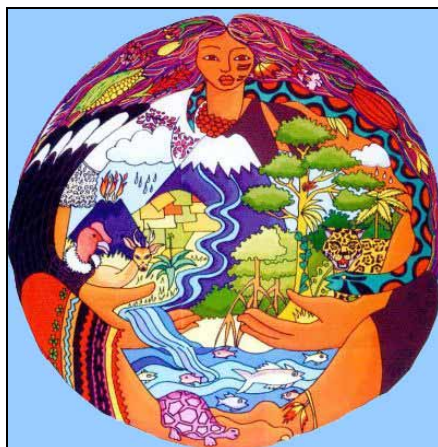
\* **For Sale** - beautiful 3 bedroom home, studio & garden on 1 1/2 acres. Skylights, cozy wood/electric heat, high/speed internet, excellent water. Galiano Island. [www.sharwilson.com](http://www.sharwilson.com)

\* **For Sale** - 2.3 forested acres, proven well, Thetis Island. \$170,000 firm. Cabin on wheels \$30,000 firm. Sothebys International Realty Canada 250-882-6680. [growland@sothebysrealty.ca](mailto:growland@sothebysrealty.ca)

### TRANSITION STREETS

Have you ever dreamed that people on street where you live on might work together to become more sustainable? That's the goal of the Transition Streets Project, funded by Vancity, part of the Transition Victoria initiative. The project leader, Peter Papagiannis, is seeking five groups of 10 neighbours in the CRD who will work together to develop Practical

Action Plans to improve their household energy efficiency, minimize their use of water, reduce their consumption and waste, explore local transportation options, and consume more locally grown food. Each group will receive a workbook and an orientation session. One of the purposes of the pilot is to see if there is merit in expanding the approach in the CRD or beyond. If you and your neighbours are interested, contact Peter at [peterpapagiannis@gmail.com](mailto:peterpapagiannis@gmail.com).



### BOLIVIA and MOTHER EARTH

One of the fundamental problems that underlies the ongoing environmental exploitation of the Earth is the assumption that humans have the right to use Nature's trees, soil, minerals and species to satisfy their needs. In Bolivia, foreign companies mining for tin, silver and gold have caused serious problems, but as the country escapes from the shadow of colonialism, it is asserting itself in new ways. Since 2009, Bolivia has been restructuring its legal system, integrating the Andean spiritual world view which places Pachamama (Mother Earth) at the centre of all existence. To give teeth to the ideals, Bolivia is passing the world's first laws that give Nature equal status to humans, and establishing 11 new rights for Nature.

These include the right to life and to exist; the right to continue vital cycles and processes free from human alteration; for Nature to have pure water, clean air and not be polluted; to not have cellular structures modified or genetically altered; and to not be affected by development projects that affect the balance of ecosystems and local inhabitant communities. To back this up, the government will establish a Ministry of Mother Earth and an ombudsman, and give communities new legal powers to monitor and control polluting industries. In Andean

spirituality, Pachamama is a living being, and the new law recognizes her as such: "She is sacred, fertile, and the source of life that feeds and cares for all living beings within her womb. She is in permanent balance, harmony and communication with the cosmos. She is comprised of all ecosystems and living beings, and their self-organization."

For some on the political right this reeks of pantheism, and they warn that it will lead to a collapse to an impoverished pre-industrial economy. If we continue to abuse Nature, however, we will all suffer an impoverished world. If the global temperature continues to rise by a further 3.5-4°C this century, Bolivia's glaciers will melt, turning much of the country into a desert. Most glaciers below 5,000 metres are expected to disappear completely within 20 years, leading to a crisis in farming and severe water shortages in cities such as La Paz and El Alto. (Thanks to John Vidal, Guardian). The new law (in Spanish) is here: <http://scr.bi/jrBbit>

### THE ARCTIC WHISPER

One of the worries about electric vehicles is "range anxiety" - will the battery run out before you get home? In the Swedish town of Umea, the problem is being solved for city buses. The Arctic Whisper is a hybrid electric bus that operates with the 100% reliability of diesel. During the day, it pulls into a fast-charging station at the end of each bus-route for a 5-10 minute fast-charge through the roof. At the end of the day, the batteries are fully recharged. This enables it to operate for 18 hours a day - and if it gets stuck in traffic, or there is power outage, it can switch to biodiesel. With no gears or differentials, it is also very quiet, and since electric drive is 3-4 times more efficient than internal combustion, its operating costs are \$2 instead of \$10.50 per 10 km. The conversion from regular hybrid to fast-charged hybrid took just six weeks. Umea's electricity is 100% zero-carbon. See [www.opbrid.com](http://www.opbrid.com)

### THE GARDEN PATH

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## JAPAN'S FUTURE POWER

Japan imports almost 100% of its energy in the form of oil, coal, gas and uranium. Following the earthquake and tsunami, four of the six Fukushima reactors are dead, and a further 27 nuclear power plants are closed, so Japan is facing a huge energy crisis on top of its terrible human crisis. The coal, oil and gas companies think they have the answer, but if we continue burning fossil fuels the world will continue to warm and the sea-level will continue to rise. In 1996, Japan's Environment Agency showed that if the sea-level rose by just one meter, 15 million people would have to move and assets worth \$4.5 trillion would be affected. Every Japanese nuclear power plant is at sea level. Our planet is en route to a 3.5-4°C increase or higher this century, and the last time the temperature was 3°C warmer, the sea level was 25 metres higher. Imagine a tsunami *on top of a 25-metre sea level rise*. It all becomes unthinkable. So what's to be done?

Japan's electricity consumption in 2009 was 1035 TWh (terawatt-hours). Increase it by 15% for electric vehicles, and it rises to 1200 TWh. How much could renewable energy provide? Solar energy provides 4.8 TWh today. If every house had a 3kW solar system on the roof, that would produce 196 TWh. Include parking garages, industrial and commercial rooftops, and roadside areas, and it might increase to 250 TWh.

Japan's wind energy produces 52 TWh today. 100 clusters of 400 turbines in its 2,500 km of eastern coastline waters could produce 400 TWh a year. On land, 1,000 clusters of 150 turbines could produce a further 400 TWh. They would occupy 226 sq km, or 8,000 sq km for the full area affected (2% of Japan's land) but farming could continue underneath.

Being in an earthquake zone, Japan also has good geothermal resources. Drilling down to 3-4 km, it has potential for 80,000 MW, able to produce 500 TWh a year. Hydro power could provide a further 140 TWh. Japan's tidal power potential in the Seto Inland Sea and offshore wave potential have yet to be evaluated. Taken together, Japan's renewable resources could provide 1550 TWh, 20% more than is needed.

This is not a theoretical discussion. 46% of Japan's energy comes from imported oil, which is getting more expensive by the day, and will soon disappear as a global energy source. These numbers are part of some ongoing research that I am doing. I hope to complete the full paper in May.

## THE JUAN DE FUCA LANDS

The proposed development of 258 tourist vacation cabins and RV Trailer sites and a 60-unit lodge, stretching along 7 kilometres of the Juan de Fuca wilderness trail, has not gone away. There was a big Sprawlpalooza on Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup> outside the CRD offices to protest this and other farmland development projects, and expect more protest at the CRD on May 11<sup>th</sup> when the proposal moves to the next stage, prior to the formal public hearing. It is still to be ruled on by the local land-use committee, not by the Directors of the CRD as a whole as it ought to be, since this is a regional treasure, not just a local resource. Minister Ida Chong has turned down a request from the CRD to allow a change in the voting structure. Unless something changes, the rezoning could be approved on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Written submissions can be sent to the CRD's Juan de Fuca Planning Office (Box 283, Sooke V9Z 0S9 by May 10<sup>th</sup>, or made in person at the meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup>. See [www.crd.bc.ca/jdf](http://www.crd.bc.ca/jdf) (Marine Trail Holdings). For the CRD Directors, with their phone numbers and emails, see [www.crd.bc.ca/about/board/directors](http://www.crd.bc.ca/about/board/directors). Also <http://forestation.wikidot.com>.

## WILD WATERFRONT SAVED

In a closely related development, partnering with The Land Conservancy, the CRD has reached an agreement in principle to purchase 2,350 hectares of land from Western Forest Products for \$18.8 million. The lands will be protected for recreation, conservation and watershed protection for generations to come, and include over 3.5km of shoreline from the world-famous surfing beach at Jordan River to Sandcut Beach. The money will come from our taxes, funded from the \$14 per household that we pay into the CRD Parks Land Acquisition Fund.

## ECO-LAW SUCCESS

And in another related development, the Environmental Law Centre has been granted \$2.75 million in new funding by the Tula Foundation, enabling it to consolidate its vision of inspiring and training the next generation of Canada's public interest environmental lawyers. Yea, Tula! This will allow the ELC to build on its 15-year record of assisting students to provide much-needed pro bono public interest environmental law support to local communities, environmental groups and First Nations across the province. The new funds

have enabled ELC to appoint Chris Tollefson as the new Chair in Environmental Law and Sustainability, and to award a professorship to our home-town eco-hero Deborah Curran.

## ACTION OF THE MONTH: PROTECT BC'S WOLVES

A new group has formed called the Canadian Wolf Coalition, merging the strengths of many organization whose members are determined to protect Canada's wolves.

Here in BC, the Coalition has learnt that the government has hired a biologist to create a wolf management plan who in 2009 recommended that wolves should be shot from helicopters to save money, and that the new plan is being developed with no public or transparent process, and no input from concerned environmental groups.

I find it appalling that any hunting of wolves is allowed. They have been wiped out over almost the entire US, and only 3% of Canada is adequately safe for wolves. The Coalition is strongly opposed to the killing of large carnivores in order to protect mountain caribou. As a keystone species, the wolves play a critical role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

BC's current wolf management plan includes the sterilization of dominant breeding pairs, the removal of lower ranking wolves, and potential aerial culling from helicopters. Hunters are allowed to use bait, there's no mandatory reporting, the hunting season is long, and in some areas there are no bag limits.

Most provincial parks allow the hunting of wolves, and they are considered vermin, allowing private landowners to shoot a wolf on site if a perceived threat exists - even though it has long been known that herds can be protected by using multiple guard dogs who live with the livestock.

The Coalition's members want to be included in the plan's development; they want the establishment of large, no-hunting sanctuaries; no use of bait; a much shorter hunting season; a ban on the use of neck-snares; and mandatory reporting.

**Action:** Write to Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Land and Natural Resource Operations, asking for far greater protection for BC's wolves.  
PO Box 9049 Victoria, V8W 9E2  
Env.minister@gov.bc.ca  
[www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/feedback.htm](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/feedback.htm)  
[www.canadianwolfcoalition.com](http://www.canadianwolfcoalition.com)