



# Sustainability Network

Building Stronger Environmental Nonprofits





The Sustainability Network is a management support centre for environmental nonprofit organizations in Canada. Our mission is to enrich environmental leaders and nonprofit organizations through programs, services and support that help them increase their capacity to lead, manage and strategize.

We focus on management assistance and training to build the capacity of environmental nonprofits. Since 1997, we have been enhancing the ability of organizations that work to conserve our natural areas, protect our water and air and move us all towards a more sustainable future. To date, we have secured nearly \$2.5 million to build organizational capacity in the environmental community.

We work on a wide range of management issues including: board governance, strategic planning, communications, program evaluation, human resource development, and fundraising. We organize subsidized and customized nonprofit management training workshops and leadership development sessions, offer training bursaries, organize public forums, act as a convener of the community and provide key information including media lists, public opinion research, and other nonprofit capacity building articles and reports. We have also added intensive management and leadership development programs to our offerings.

Environmental leaders heartily support our efforts and numerous funders have, over the years, partnered with us to provide the necessary financial support for our work.

## Letter from the Chair and Director

Friends,

The past year has been busy and exciting for the Sustainability Network. We consider it a turning point in how we see our role as a capacity builder and in the kinds of programming we will offer in the future.

We continue to promote the importance of capacity building, leadership development and strategy as critical areas for the sector to focus on as it grows in size and influence. We strive to be responsive through our programs that address challenges and opportunities identified by the environmental community—we continue to be led by the people we are serving.

Our core work remains rock solid—providing a wide range of nonprofit management information and training to Canada's environmental community. Our key outreach tool is Nexus, a monthly digest that offers free articles, books and resources on the management and leadership issues that face environmental NGOs. In the past year, we added to our highly successful editions in Ontario and Manitoba/Saskatchewan, with versions for Atlantic Canada and Alberta. Beyond Nexus, we also hosted twelve training workshops and breakfast forums and awarded seventeen training bursaries.

Learning Networks, a new program that holds particular promise, are a regional effort focused on relatively small groups of leaders who are convened for a series of three retreats that take place over two years. These intensive sessions include traditional NGO management training in a context that allows for more advanced exploration, reflection and leadership development. We launched this program at the Tatamagouche Centre (NS) in November 2005. The Atlantic Learning Network meets two more times in 2006, a Prairie Learning Network begins in April 2006 and we are currently securing funding for an Ontario Learning Network for groups focused on freshwater issues. Lastly, a modified national Learning Network for emerging leaders called Environmental Leadership and Management (ELM) will be held in May 2006 and January 2007.

We are continually inspired by working with such committed and passionate leaders and proud to be able to bring so many capacity building efforts to the environmental community. Our established programs provide a solid foundation on which to add innovative and more intensive new programs tailored to those we serve.

We want to thank all of our supporters and partners who help us in our efforts. Their commitments have helped hundreds of individuals working for a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable future become better able to meet their missions and strengthen their organizations.

Sincerely,

Geoff Cape  
Board Chair

Paul Bubelis  
Executive Director

## Learning Networks



Learning Networks are our innovative new approach to capacity building where approximately fifteen environmental leaders from a region come together for a series of three multi-day residential retreats over two years. These leaders receive traditional organizational management training, but are also challenged to view their role and the role of their organization in a broader context. Participants get training from top instructors, hear from leaders in the field around challenges and trends, have an opportunity to engage one another, and take time to pause and reflect on their work. A key requisite of the participants is to nest the learning back into the culture and practice of their particular organization. Participants are provided with modest stipends, which allow further exploration of a key theme from the preceding Learning Network session.

The first Atlantic Learning Network session, held November 24-27, 2005 at the Tatamagouche Centre in Nova Scotia, convened current and emerging Atlantic ENGO leaders and focused them on resource capacity challenges. The program drew heavily on the experience and knowledge of the participants and provided various thinking tools, speakers and content experts.

The first Prairie Learning Network session was held April 27-29 at the Delta Marsh Field Station in Manitoba. Subsequent sessions are set for the fall of 2006 and the spring of 2007. We are also in the final stages of securing funding for an Ontario Learning Network dedicated to organizations working on freshwater issues, which will commence in the fall of 2006.

### To date, Prairie Learning Network resource experts have included:

Jamie Gamble, Imprint Inc.

John Willis, Strategic Communications

Ken Wyman, CFRE, Ken Wyman and Associates

Stuart Baker, The Branding Merchants

Pat Hardy, CFRE, The Tunnelwood Group

I liked the approach of holding the three linked workshops over a year and a half and the provision of stipends to allow participants to devote some time between workshops to a concern or challenge. The first workshop was well organized and useful and included good speakers and the group exercises were practical and relevant.

**Mark Butler**, Director  
Ecology Action Centre, NS

The expert resources were incredibly helpful. It was great having experts on hand to clarify fundraising for non-profits in our area. It really helped focus my efforts. Having the opportunity to share knowledge and experience with other similar groups made a real difference. I learned so much over the course of one weekend!

**Krista Morrisey**, Executive Director  
Conservation Council of New Brunswick

Learning organizations are leading organizations—ENGOS in Atlantic Canada are rapidly changing and the Atlantic Learning Network provides a great opportunity to learn from outside experts but more importantly it is a chance for ENGO leaders to learn from each other.

**James Sullivan**, Executive Director  
Two Countries, One Forest, NS

## Environmental Leadership and Management

Built from the Learning Network model, and other programs that blend leadership and management, we have developed this program for young and emerging leaders called Environmental Leadership and Management (ELM). ELM will bring together twenty young staff of environmental nonprofits from across Canada to the Ecology Retreat Centre, just outside Toronto, for two three-day sessions in May 2006 and January 2007.



ELM is designed to build the capacity and widen the perspectives among this cohort by expanding their potential for advanced leadership, building their network and the connections between groups, providing time for personal and professional reflection, and by focusing their attention on key capacity issues such as fundraising, communications and board development. ELM will provide significant support to this group of “up-and-comers” that will have immediate and lasting effects. We are excited to present ELM as our first national program.

Let me congratulate you on developing [the Environmental Leadership and Management Program] because I believe it is critical that Canada have a strong and growing network of environmental leaders. The skills and friendships gained by participants through this program will offer immediate benefits to them and their organizations, but even larger, long-term benefits to the country as they

carry out their respective missions to greater effect. As a graduate of the McGill-McConnell Masters program for management in the voluntary sector, I appreciate how vital such a program is to strengthening the environmental movement.

**Marlo Reynolds, PhD**, Executive Director  
The Pembina Institute, AB

The ELM program presents a unique opportunity for people to cultivate their effectiveness and address challenges by providing networking opportunities and intensive leadership and skills training that are critical to the development of successful leaders in today's growing environmental sector.

**Tanya Moore**, Regional Coordinator  
Canadian Boreal Initiative

In spite of the sometimes discouraging political climate that often either neglects or attacks nature, there are hundreds of thousands of good-hearted people and hundreds of organizations struggling to protect it. Undoubtedly the Sustainability Network can strengthen all of us with the sharing of ideas and encouragement to protect our natural world.

**Robert Bateman**, Author

## NEXUS



Nexus is our capacity building e-monthly for Canada's environmental nonprofit community. With the many challenges and demands facing ENGO leaders, they are hard pressed for the time required to stay on top of all the capacity related information on best practices constantly being produced. We pass along our cut of the best that is being offered including: articles, reports, occasional free books, media lists and web site referrals. We aim to get the community quick and easy access to the latest information on how to make their nonprofit stronger and more effective. Each edition also announces Sustainability Network events and programs, trainings and workshops, and proves funding leads and other capacity building opportunities.

Nexus is currently offered in three regions (Atlantic Canada, Ontario, and the Prairies) to almost 5,500 subscribers. In 2005, we distributed roughly 5,100 articles and reports, 600 books, and 200 media lists.

We see Nexus as our most important means of providing basic nonprofit management tools, information, and resources. As readership continues to grow, we will strive to make this resource more innovative in its ability to deliver relevant and accessible management and organizational development information to Canada's environmental community.

## Breakfast Forums

We organize quarterly public forums in Toronto, which are designed to build capacity in the environmental nonprofit community. Speakers include: funders, communications experts, authors, community leaders and other luminaries. These forums are not only presented as an opportunity for the environmental community to gain new insights and hear from leading thinkers on a wide range of topics, but also bring leaders within and outside the environmental community together to share thoughts and ideas and to network. Roughly 250 people attended our four forums in 2005.

### Recent Public Forums

**Michael Adams** on his new book "American Backlash: The Untold Story of Social Change in the United States"

**Justin Trudeau** on his environmental efforts

**Ken Wiwa** on "A Socio-Economic Partnership for Africa"

**Todd Southgate** on "Film Making, Advocacy and the Amazon"

**Evan Solomon, Andrew Heintzman and Stuart Laidlaw** on their new book "Feeding the Future"

For me, the Sustainability Network newsletter is a great time-saver. With all the daily pressures and extra things that come up, I don't have time to search out the kinds of resources they feature on a regular basis. I think they do a great job of putting practical tools into the hands of busy NGO people to help make our work more effective.

**Randall McQuaker**, Executive Director  
Resource Conservation Manitoba

I always look forward to receiving the Sustainability Network e-newsletter. It provides very valuable and timely information and resources. We have benefited greatly from your organization's generosity. I feel it's even more important for remote organizations to benefit from your services, as we find it difficult to "keep in the loop".

**Margo Shaw**, Director, Upper Lakes  
Environmental Research Network, on



## Trainings and Workshops

We organize training workshops to help leaders of environmental nonprofits develop their management skills. Topics include: fundraising, grant writing, board development and governance, strategic planning, collaboration, marketing and communications, and much more. Last year, we hosted 11 trainings, seminars and workshops with a combined attendance of over 300 people. These offerings continue to be a central part of our work and our main vehicle to providing introductory training to a large number of organizations.

### Recent Workshops

**Designing Vibrant Organizations**  
Lorne Ellingson, Mary Davis  
Toronto

**Developing and Growing Your Membership**  
Amy O'Connor  
Toronto

**Community-Based Social Marketing for Environmentalists**  
Doug McKenzie-Mohr  
Winnipeg and Saskatoon

**Selling Social Change: Earned Income Strategies for Grassroots Groups**  
Andy Robinson  
Toronto

**Home and Native Land: Part 1 and 2**  
Kate Kempton, Larry Innis  
Toronto

**Project Management Fundamentals**  
Rob Purdie  
Toronto

**Sierra Legal Defence Fund's Legal Toolkit**  
Devon Page, Justin Duncan  
Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Windsor, Ottawa

**Building a Better Board: The Role of Staff**  
Nathan Garber  
Toronto

**Fundraising for Environmentalists**  
Ken Wyman  
White Point, Nova Scotia

**Drive the Debate: Framing for Environmentalists**  
Mary MacNutt  
Toronto

**Branding Environmental Nonprofits: Defining Your Organizational Personality**  
Suzanne Hawkes  
Toronto

The Sustainability Network plays a unique and essential role in helping Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOs) build their capacity to understand their public environment, to fundraise and to communicate with various stakeholders. Such facilitation makes them smarter, more effective and ultimately more successful in helping restore balance to this planet's ecosystem.

**Michael Adams**, President, The Environics Group of Companies

Sustainability Network is valuable because it increases the profile of issues significant to leaders and managers, provides a skills base for leaders or environmental organizations...it also provides a network for leaders and broadens the scope of the ENGO community to include non-environmental NGO partners.

**Kevin Mercer**, Riverside Stewardship Alliance, ON

The Sustainability Network has greatly assisted BARC's organizational and management capacity. The training workshops and bursaries have been a value added contribution that we truly appreciate. A small organization such as ours does not have internal staff resources to draw upon when management questions arise, so the subsidized training truly does fill a gap.

Thank you again for providing such a valuable, effective service. I look forward to participating in future workshops.

**Marilyn Baxter**, Manager, Bay Area Restoration Council, ON

## Bursaries

We provide management training for environmental leaders by providing modest bursaries to help environmental leaders access existing programs at universities, community colleges or through special seminars or on-line courses. Bursaries cover up to 50% of the registration costs to a maximum of \$500 per person. These training subsidies allow individuals to seek out highly tailored, relevant and timely management training.

### Recent Recipients

Lea Ann Mallett, EcoSource

G. Markande, Eneract

Mary Jane Patterson, Elora Centre for Environmental Excellence

Heather Ray, Fatal Light Awareness Program

Jennifer Simard, Mushkegowuk Environmental Research Centre

Jodi Joy, Lori Marcantonio, Ruth Catana and Darcie Barnatt, Nature Canada

Susan Swail, Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust

Jen Heneberry, Positive Power Co-operative Inc.

Selene Cole, Sierra Club of Canada, Atlantic Canada Chapter

Nadine Gauvin, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability

Shelly Petrie, Toronto Environmental Alliance

Nicole Thourad, Wildlands League

Laurie Shutt, Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre

Jennifer Hounsel, Riversides Stewardship Alliance

Jennifer Graham, Ecology Action Centre

Myriam Hammami, Sierra Club of Canada, Atlantic Chapter

## Direct Management Assistance

This program was designed to provide organization-specific management assistance environmental NGOs based in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Organizations defined key capacity building challenges and the Sustainability Network would pay 90% of the management consulting costs of the intervention. Most projects involved \$5,000-\$10,000 of consulting and took place over several months.

### In 2005, we worked with the following:

**Riversides Stewardship Alliance** to prepare an issue scan, market survey and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (swot) analysis for a facilitated strategic planning exercise.

**Couchiching Conservancy** to develop a corporate membership program with the help of a marketing professional.

**Georgian Bay Land Trust** to create a development plan for the organization.

**Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF)** to work on strategic planning and board development.

The workshops, breakfasts and other initiatives of the Sustainability Network are unique. Environmental organizations get practical tips on everything from raising money to managing staff from experienced people who know how to “walk the talk”. Informative, friendly and affordable, the Network’s programs are first-rate.

**David Love**, Executive Director  
Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto  
and former Vice President at World Wildlife Fund Canada

I really appreciate all the services the Sustainability Network provides. They are really useful and helpful to our organization. Sustainability Network is like a beacon to help those of us who are working on small budgets for training, workshops and publications.

**Karen Hutchinson**, Program Director  
Caledon Countryside Alliance, ON

## Other Initiatives

### Public Opinion Research

For the last few years, through a partnership with Angus McAllister Opinion Research, Environics, and GlobeScan, we have been able to offer Environmental Monitor subscriptions and briefings to environmental nonprofits at a great discount. 2005-2006 subscribers are Environmental Defense, Wildlands, Conservation Ontario, Evergreen, Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto, Clean Air Partnership and IMPACS.

### Young Conservation Professionals Program

This program, led by Peter Mitchell of the University of Guelph and Dr. Gordon Ball, brings young leaders together for management and leadership training. The Sustainability Network supported this effort by hosting workshops, participating at their retreat and offering discounted workshop registrations to participants.

### Liaison With Other Capacity Builders

We participated in a bi-national meeting of Mott Foundation funded capacity builders in Washington, DC. We are also a founding member of the Ontario Capacity Builders Network and help manage a Trillium grant that the group received to undertake research on the field and to explore marketing opportunities.

### Atlantic ENGO Conference

We sponsored and participated in this regional meeting of environmental leaders held in White Point, Nova Scotia in the spring of 2005. The ENGO meeting was held in conjunction with the annual conference of the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network.

### Understanding Freshwater NGOs

In March 2006, we presented Baird Straughn of the Institute for Conservation Leadership (Washington, DC) for a discussion with Ontario freshwater leaders on the efficiency and capacity building needs of their organizations.

## Special Evaluation and Reflection Project

A grant from the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation enabled us to undertake an organizational evaluation and reflection. Key informant interviews, a survey, focus groups and a strategy session broadened our understanding of community needs and informed deliberations on our future strategic direction.

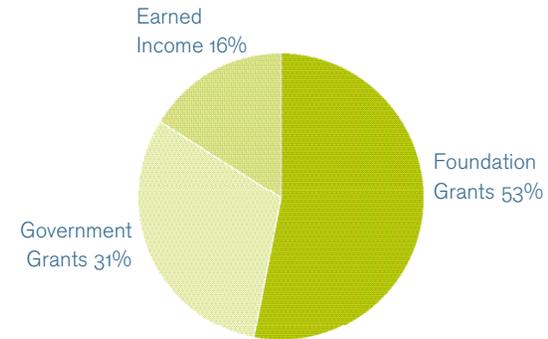
We were encouraged by the positive responses and the important insights and recommendations respondents gave. This evaluation is critical in our ongoing efforts to deliver capacity building tools, learning opportunities and other resources to strengthen the environmental community.

# Financials

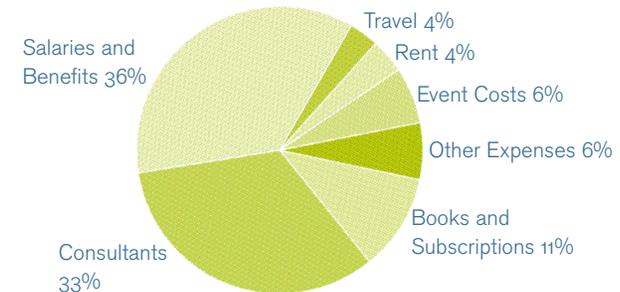
Revenues	2005 actuals	2006 budgeted
Foundation Grants	\$157,627	\$220,000
Government Grants	\$91,729	\$58,300
Subscriptions	\$17,965	\$18,500
Event Income	\$17,259	\$27,600
Sales and Consulting	\$3,125	-
Projector Rentals	\$2,690	\$2,000
Interest Income	\$4,722	\$3,000
Sundry Income	\$1,575	-
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$296,692</b>	<b>\$329,400</b>

Expenses	2005 actuals	2006 budgeted
Books and Subscriptions	\$31,238	\$25,200
Bursaries	\$5,370	\$8,000
Computer	\$2,883	\$2,190
Consulting	\$95,919	\$74,100
Event Costs	\$18,008	\$68,500
Rent	\$11,179	\$12,172
Office and General	\$7,824	\$10,338
Professional Fees	\$2,357	\$2,700
Salaries and Benefits	\$103,252	116,200
Travel	\$10,355	\$5,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$288,385</b>	<b>\$324,400</b>
Excess over year to reserve	\$8,370	\$5,000

2005 Revenues



2005 Expenses





## Staff

### **Paul Bubelis**

Executive Director

### **Saul Ettlin**

Program Coordinator  
arrived fall '05

### **Shehrina Tabassam**

Program Assistant  
left fall '05

## Board of Directors

### **Arthur Bull**

Executive Director  
Saltwater Network

### **Geoff Cape**

Executive Director  
Evergreen

### **Sarah Winterton**

Programme Director  
Environmental Defense Canada

### **Merle Young**

Manager, Finance & Technology  
Laidlaw Foundation

### **Julie Gelfand**

President  
Nature Canada

### **Andrew Heintzman**

President  
Investeco Capital Corporation

### **Peter Mitchell**

Research Associate  
Centre for Land and Water Stewardship,  
University of Guelph

### **Dianne Russell**

Executive Director  
Institute for Conservation Leadership

### **Joel Solomon**

Executive Director  
Endswell Foundation

## Our Supporters

We sincerely thank the funders who support our capacity building work across Canada. Below are the organizations that funded work or made commitments to fund work in 2005-2006.

**Ontario Trillium Foundation**

**TD Financial Group**

**Salamander Foundation**

**Ivey Foundation**

**Canadian Boreal Initiative**

**Suncor Energy Foundation**

**EJLB Foundation**

**TD Friends of the Environment  
Foundation**

**The Winnipeg Foundation**

**The C.P. Loewen Family Foundation**

**Joyce Foundation**

**George Cedric Metcalf Charitable  
Foundation**

**Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**

**Thomas Sill Foundation**

**Alberta Ecotrust**

**Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation**



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