

RCEN 2009 AGA: Speakers and Presentations

Friday, June 12th

7:00pm: Keynote Speech

Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

An Algerian national, Dr. Djoghlaif has pursued a distinguished diplomatic career that has included postings with the government of Algeria and UNEP. He assumed the position of Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in January 2006. Throughout his career, Dr. Djoghlaif has increased his extensive knowledge of global environment processes within the UN system and within the CBD process. Notably, he was the General Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), better known as the "Rio Summit". He was Vice Chairman of the Eleventh Session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development and Vice President of the Negotiating Committee on the Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as Chair of one of the two negotiating committees of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

Saturday, June 13th

1:00pm: Presentation on Urban Permaculture

Ron Berezan, Owner/Operator, The Urban Farmer

Ever since his first "accidental" garden as a young university student, Ron has been exploring and promoting new possibilities for growing food sustainably in urban areas. He has been trained in the "Bio-Intensive" organic gardening method at Ecology Action in Willets, California and in permaculture design at the Kootenay Permaculture Institute and Occidental Arts and Ecology Centre. He is a Master Gardener and a member of the Society of Organic Urban Land Care Professionals (SOUL). Currently, Ron operates The Urban Farmer, an organic gardening, edible landscaping and Permaculture design service in Edmonton (www.theurbanfarmer.ca). When his hands are not in the soil, Ron offers workshops on a variety of organic gardening and Permaculture themes throughout Western Canada.

Synopsis: "Down the Garden Path— Sowing the Seeds for a Greener Future"

Gardens are the mysterious and wonderful place where human culture and the natural world intersect. Each gardener offers up his or her imagination, vision and skill in partnership with the living, evolving matrix of soil, sun, water, and plants to create these unique and transformative spaces. As our gardens have historically been an expression of our perceived relationship to the natural world and our sense of place within it, many gardeners today are feeling deeply the call to reflect a vision of environmental sustainability within their own gardens and in community spaces. Visionary Australian gardener Geoff Lawton claims that "You can solve all of the world's problems in a garden." Can gardens be a place of healing and restoration for an ailing planet? How can urban gardeners plant the seeds and nurture the dream of a truly greener future?

4:00pm: Panel on Sustainable Community Management

Mark Anielski, Author, "The Economics of Happiness: Building Genuine Wealth"

Mark Anielski is an Edmonton-based author of the best-selling, award-winning book "The Economics of Happiness: Building Genuine Wealth". In 2008, Mark's book won a gold medal in the category of consciousness business books at the Nautilus Book Awards in Los Angeles and a bronze medal in the economics category of the Axiom Book Awards in New York. Mark is a well-

being economist, entrepreneur, professor and president of his family-owned corporation, Anielski Management Inc., which specializes in measuring the sustainable well-being of communities and nations. Mark teaches corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship at the School of Business, University of Alberta and is a founding faculty member of the Bainbridge Graduate Institute (the first MBA program in sustainable business).

Synopsis: Mark Anielski will present his ideas and examples of how communities in Canada and internationally can build flourishing economies of well-being, based on the principles of wise stewardship, moderation and reciprocity. Mark will provide tangible examples from his book *The Economics of Happiness* as to how communities and organizations around the world are working with his Genuine Wealth model for charting a new economic development path towards local, living and flourishing communities of well-being and moving beyond the current economic growth, money-debt model. He will demonstrate why this vision of economies of well-being will ultimately lead to enduring happiness, as the Dalai Lama has said is the ultimate purpose of economic development.

Louis Charest, Director, Régie intermunicipale de gestion intégrée des déchets de Bécancour-Nicolet-Yamaska

Louis Charest is the Director of the Bécancour-Nicolet-Yamaska intermunicipal agency for integrated waste management (36,000 inhabitants, 23 municipalities). He volunteers in 12 organizations of which 10 work on environmental issues and 2 in economic development. These organizations work at the local, regional, provincial and national levels. Louis acts as a speaker in conferences on a yearly basis. He also writes environmental articles and reports for parliamentary commissions. His environmental hot spots are waste, water, energy and sustainable development. His motto is to walk the talk!

Synopsis: Louis will present an excerpt from a reflection on the different steps to take for the landscaping of a residence, a business, an institution or an industry. There is a total of 32 steps that are developed in a 16-page document of which 17,000 copies were distributed in 2009. Putting these steps into practice will ensure that the amount of waste generated will significantly decrease, the air and water quality will improve and that biodiversity, as a bonus, will be preserved.

Jerry Wood, Spiritual Elder

Jerry Wood is a Cree First Nations born and raised in Saddle Lake, Alberta. He is a practicing Spiritual Elder who is very active in his community. Jerry is a member of the Council of Elders and advisor for the Catholic School Board District in Edmonton, Aboriginal Awareness Trainer, advisor on many committees and elder/educator at Grant MacEwan Community College and the University of Alberta.

Together with his wife, they have developed their business "Eagle Spirit Cultural Programs Inc." Jerry's mission is to try to live his life following the traditional teachings and share his wisdom with others who wish to gain a deeper understanding of the traditional Native way of life.

Synopsis: Jerry will base his presentation on the Aboriginal view, importance and protection of mother earth and its environment since time immemorial.

7:00pm – Keynote Speech

Stephen Mandel, Mayor of Edmonton

Serving Alberta's Capital City, Mayor Stephen Mandel has led the City of Edmonton since October 2004. Mayor Mandel is a strong advocate for Alberta municipalities, ensuring they receive a fair share of funding to pay for vital infrastructure and community services. As Mayor, Stephen is a steadfast steward of numerous green initiatives and remains committed to

preserving Edmonton's reputation as a global environmental leader. Before running for public office, Mayor Mandel was an accomplished businessman bringing 30 years of private sector experience to City Hall. He remains active in the community and volunteers for organizations including the Mazankowski Heart Institute, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Jewish Community Centre, and Allen Gray Continuing Care Centre.

Sunday, June 14th

9:30am: Panel on the State of Environmental Assessment in Canada

Cindy Chiasson, Executive Director, Environmental Law Centre

Cindy Chiasson studied political science and law at the University of Alberta, obtained her LL.B. in 1985 and was admitted to the Alberta Bar in 1987. She joined the Environmental Law Centre as Staff Counsel in 1997 and was appointed Executive Director in 2002. Cindy has extensive environmental regulatory experience working with the Alberta government in the development of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and related regulations and codes of practice. She also has in-depth experience in contaminated sites, air quality, and agricultural matters. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Clean Air Strategic Alliance and Clean Air Canada and the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Council and is currently a member of the NRCB Policy Advisory Group.

Karin Buss, Counsel, Ecojustice Canada

Karin Buss has been practicing in the area of environmental law and aboriginal law for 16 years. She is counsel to Ecojustice since it opened its Alberta office in 2008. Her environmental practice has included representing environmental groups, landowners, aboriginal and other groups at 13 oil sands hearings; representing individuals and groups impacted by power plants, sour gas facilities, transmission lines, pipelines, and hazardous waste facilities. Karin has been selected by her peers as one of the "Best Lawyers in Canada" in the field of aboriginal law and a leading practitioner in environmental law. Her volunteer activities include serving on the Board of Directors of the Environmental Law Centre and teaching law students.

10:30am: Workshop on Nuclear Energy

Jim Harding, founding member, Regina Group for a Non-Nuclear Society and International Uranium Congress

Jim Harding is a retired professor of environmental and justice studies. He is a founding member of the Regina Group for a Non-Nuclear Society and International Uranium Congress and was director of research for Prairie Justice Research at the University of Regina. Professor Harding also acted as Prairie Correspondent for Nuclear Free Press and consultant to the award-winning film *Uranium*. Jim is the author of *Canada's Deadly Secret: Saskatchewan Uranium and the Global Nuclear System* (Fernwood, 2007).

Synopsis: In a nutshell, Jim will contribute in four areas: 1) why nuclear power is an obstruction to cost-effective climate change strategy; 2) why we don't want to go from "the frying pan of global warming into the nuclear fire" - and increase the risks of proliferation; 3) why we need to recognize the environmental health dangers, including to watersheds, along the whole nuclear fuel system; and 4) how full-costing of nuclear power pretty much rules it out of the energy market (unless it continues to get state financial backing).

11:30am: Presentation on the Environmental Petitions Process

Rebecca Aird, Petitions Manager, Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development

Rebecca joined the Office of the Auditor General, Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, in January 2003 after over 15 years working as a consultant on a wide range of sustainable development issues, including land use, life-cycle management, climate change, sustainable housing, and pollutant inventories. Since joining the OAG, she has worked on performance audits on pesticide management, green procurement, and federal sustainable development strategy commitments. Rebecca recently returned to the OAG as Environmental Petitions Manager after a two-year leave, during which she founded a community-based organization that has successfully established a number of local projects to support more sustainable living.

Synopsis: This environmental petitions process makes it possible for any resident of Canada to ask federal ministers and their departments to explain federal policy, investigate or take action on an environmental issue, or examine their enforcement of environmental legislation. Since the petitions process was established by Parliament in 1995, over 300 petitions have been submitted by individuals and civil society groups. Petitions create a public record of Ministerial positions on issues raised. They can also bring new information to light, help move concerns forward, and raise awareness and understanding in departments. The presentation will provide some background on the process and how to use it, and some examples of where it has made a difference.