

The Next Wave

Weathering the Coming Storm



An analysis of current trends and the opportunities for leadership in Canada

November 2014

CREDITS

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“The Next Wave: Weathering the Coming Storm”

November, 2014

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All views and comments contained herein are those of the author.

Preface



Photo: www.monbiot.com

“The inescapable failure of a society built upon growth and its destruction of the Earth’s living systems are the overwhelming facts of our existence. As a result they are mentioned almost nowhere. They are the 21st Century’s great taboo, the subjects guaranteed to alienate your friends and neighbours. We live as if trapped inside a Sunday supplement: obsessed with fame, fashion and the three dreary staples of middle class conversation: recipes, renovations and resorts. Anything but the topic that demands our attention.”

George Monbiot

[The Impossibility of Growth](#)

Published in the Guardian, May 28, 2014

[Hope] lies in our collective desire for a good life.

We all have moments when we feel there is no hope.

Those of us who work on environmental issues and sustainability devote our lives to hope, yet we fear the worst. The challenges seem insurmountable, and the social and political will to tackle them is absent.

This paper was commissioned out of hope. It was commissioned in the belief that the next wave of commitment and leadership in sustainability is just around the corner and perhaps, this time, we can get it right.

There are answers and yes, there is hope. They are not simple answers, and there certainly is no simple fix to the problems of overconsumption and pollution, but there is hope and it lies in our collective desire for a good life.

We may be driven by fear, but in the end we will be motivated by hope.

The ideas in this paper are a starting point for a new approach. You can adapt and adopt them into your own work, they can be developed individually, or they can be linked together into a national strategy. I hope they help.

Chris Winter
November 20, 2014

Haiku Summary

*Stuff's gonna happen,
People will deal, then adapt,
Live better with less.*



Executive Summary

The general consensus is that we face tough times ahead.

Over the past six months, I have been researching and writing this paper on the next wave in environmental and sustainability leadership in Canada. Within it, there are recommendations for leaders throughout society, business, government, and funders. When I refer to “we” in this report, it refers to us as Canadian society, but in particular to those of us who are in a position to be leaders in the next wave.

The report is in three sections:

1. **Who we are:** a summary of the environment-related movements, concluding with an outline of what the next wave will look like.
2. **The trends:** a summary of significant environmental, economic, and social trends, all of which point to serious problems on the horizon. The section concludes that they are all interconnected, mutually reinforcing, and therefore we need to focus on solutions that address the common issue of unsustainable consumption.
3. **The solutions:** a series of recommendations on how Canada’s leaders can help shape and be a catalyst for the next wave. The recommendations range from simple projects to an understanding of how we can build the cultural foundation for voluntary change.

Things we know

It is surprising how much we already know. After compiling research and ideas on both the problems and solutions, I would often be struck by the thought, “but we already know this.” The data is there, the public awareness is there, and the frustration with our inability to act is consistent from backyards to boardrooms.

These are some of the things we know:

1. The general consensus is that we face tough times ahead.
 - a. We know that extreme weather will become the new normal, and that the costs associated with weather events will rise.
 - b. We know resources (energy, water, minerals, and farmland) will become scarcer, resulting in greater economic pressure to develop the last pristine areas and an increased cost of living.

2. The social and political trends are toward isolation and protectionism as opposed to community and investment in our future.
 - a. Lower taxes and budget cuts are a higher priority than investing in sustainability.
 - b. There has been a growing social and political backlash against environmental leadership and innovation.
3. The positive trends are small, but significant. They offer the seeds of hope and a foundation for new approaches.
 - a. There is a strong trend towards convergence – finding elegant solutions with multiple benefits that support multiple goals.
 - b. There is a strong organic approach – many individual and local initiatives that offer solutions to help people live better through a greener lifestyle.


What this means

When you look at all the trends together, it becomes apparent that they are negative, interconnected, and indicative of dark days ahead.

These are some of the implications of what we know:

1. We can no longer offer hope that our actions will avert crisis – be it climate change or resource scarcity. Nature doesn't make deals, it just reacts.
2. Our view of sustainability needs to shift from trying to “balance” environment, economy, and society, to recognizing that the environment is the foundation of a healthy economy and, in turn, a healthy society. Our economy and social wealth is drawn from the environment and we return our waste back to the environment.
3. There is little point in devoting resources to arguing that climate change exists. It does, and nature and the internet will do a much better job of convincing people than we can. Arguing with deniers only serves their ends. Our focus needs to be squarely on helping Canada adapt to turbulent times.
4. We **can** offer hope in helping people adapt. No matter what the circumstances, humans will always strive to improve their lives. Whether we are dealing with a steady increase in the cost of living,





There is no simple answer, other than to say it will take a concerted and united investment in the cultural values that underpin our ability to act.

or with a major economic downturn, we need to demonstrate how we can live better with less.

5. We need to embrace a common vision that links environmental, social, and economic concerns into a commitment to invest in a sustainable future for Canada.
6. We need to empower organic, voluntary change. Every strategic intervention we make, be it programs, funding, fiscal instruments, or policy, needs to support the ability of Canadians to live better with less.

What we can do

It is always important to stand back periodically from the day-to-day struggle and assess how well we are doing, where the gaps lie, and what we can do about them. Then we get back to work, hopefully with new insights on the directions we need to take. But what, exactly, can we do to counter such deep and negative trends?

I believe we can do a lot, from individual initiatives to collaborative approaches. It all depends on the degree to which we work together towards the common goals of making Canada a great place to live, and helping Canadians live better with less.

There is no simple answer, other than to say it will take a concerted and united investment in the cultural values that underpin our ability to act. This is why the recommendations lead with a call to “reclaim Canada”, and in particular the belief in Canada as a great place to live.

Seven main recommendations flow from the analysis. On one level, they are simple and logical extensions of the initiatives and positive counter-trends that are already on the ground. Each recommendation is based on existing activities or case studies that, if expanded, would be an effective catalysts for positive change. Taken together, the recommendations are a strategic approach to supporting the next wave in environmental and sustainability leadership.

These are the recommendations:

1. **Reclaim Canada:** develop a national vision
 - Develop our national vision of Canada as a great place to live and as a leader in creating a better world
 - Incorporate this vision into the 2017 Sesquicentennial celebrations
 - Focus on genuine progress
2. **Challenge Ourselves:** market solutions
 - Develop co-ordinated national campaigns to promote solutions that help people live better with less, such as urban villages, transit and safe cycling, energy conservation and renewable power, local food, and local green jobs
3. **Raise New Funds:** finance the future
 - Raise new funds
 - Build the national commitment to invest in our future
4. **Collaborate:** organize for change
 - Establish solutions networks and coalitions
 - Focus on collective impact
 - Promote civic action across Canada
5. **Lead:** build leadership across Canada
 - Find champions for Canada
 - Promote a distributed leadership model
6. **Empower Others:** a focus on voluntary transitions
 - Create Innovation Centres
 - Support community networking and action.
 - Support projects and innovations that have the potential to support positive social and economic development across Canada.
7. **Review:** consultation and continuous improvement
 - Report on results and trends
 - Engage stakeholders and the public in reviewing our progress

In the end, the transition to a sustainable lifestyle and economy will be made either by choice or by crisis.

Finally, three options are presented as ways to move ahead with these recommendations:

1. **Organic** – to allow the recommendations to percolate into the emerging new approaches to help people live better with less.
2. **Strategic** – to adapt and adopt specific recommendations into individual projects and campaigns that will empower organic change.
3. **Transformative** – to develop high-level strategies and initiatives aimed at creating and realizing a strong, positive vision for Canada.



The concept of organic change is critical. In the end, the transition to a sustainable lifestyle and economy will be made either by choice or by crisis. Our ultimate goal is to make that transition through choice, whether to avert a future crisis or to better prepare ourselves to deal with the crisis when it comes. The key to “change by choice” lies in developing solutions that improve our lives at the same time as they conserve resources. Change by choice leads to a series of opportunities including social ventures, products, and services; all designed to make it easier and affordable for individuals and companies to shift to sustainable practices.

Where do we start?

Of the dozens of ideas contained in The Next Wave, here are five priorities that challenge us to do better, to collaborate, and that will help people live better with less.

1. **Build a better map.** Document leadership in the next wave across Canada. Better mapping is the foundation for increased collaboration and strategic initiatives.
2. **Rethink climate action.** The next provincial or federal climate plan to be reviewed (and it will likely be Ontario’s) is an opportunity to put the recommendations on integrated high-

level strategies into practice. Let the climate imperative be the driver, and the solutions be clearly focused on helping us live better with less carbon. Give us a positive vision for 2050, and the tools to make it happen!

3. **Start a campaign.** Take one solution and run with it. Put the principles of convergence and collective impact into practice. Build a truly national collaboration, make a major investment or raise new funds, and aim to make a measurable shift in both public commitment and public policy.
4. **Organize a community.** Start with a few pilot communities and organize for the voluntary transition to a sustainable future. Identify community goals for living better with less (a village centre, walkability, transit, safe cycling, community power, local food, an innovation centre, etc.); identify a community network and build an inventory of assets; secure funding and municipal support; develop a five-year rolling action plan; and celebrate success.
5. **Talk it up.** From backyards to boardrooms, talk about our future. Come up with your own ideas, or adapt and adopt any of the ideas presented in this paper.

True leadership is about empowerment – using power and influence to help others. The best strategic initiatives will be the ones that support and amplify the organic, positive change that is happening all around us.

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Introduction

CULTURE LINKS

We may choose to ignore science, but we cannot ignore society.

There are links to social media embedded throughout this paper. If you spend time on Facebook or YouTube, chances are you will recognize many of the videos and understand them in the context of the ideas presented in this paper.

If you do not follow new media, take time to follow some of the links and videos, for this is how most people now filter the issues and science of the day.

This paper is written from the perspective of one who has spent thirty years working within the environmental movement; the conservation movement to be more precise, and conservation as an approach to living our lives in harmony with nature to be even more precise. My interest lies in finding solutions that make sense now, that can be easily “adapted and adopted” by others, and that will be catalysts for the transition to a more sustainable society.

I have one foot planted in the concern for our common future, and the other foot planted in the reality of what we can actually do.

You will see this approach reflected in this report. At times you may feel it is stretching too far; at other times you might find the recommendations too simple. It can't be helped. The truth is, it will be extremely difficult to find solutions that allow us to have our cake and eat it too. The chances are remote that we will find voluntary solutions that are able to meet the combined challenges of climate change, resource scarcity, and the resulting economic and social disruption. The truth is, we face rough times ahead, and change will most likely come through crisis than by choice.

But let no one say we didn't try. At the very least, can we not aspire to build the foundation for the future?

The first question to answer is **who is the audience for this report?** It is us, surely, but who are we? “We” are the movement, but which movement? Who is in it, and who is not and therefore in need of convincing and converting? To answer this question, we must first look at the nature and evolution of the environmental movement.

Do we need a new approach? To answer this we must look at the overall trends in society and assess where we have met with success, and where we can improve. We need to look at how we can win the war, and not just individual battles.

Who are the leaders, the decision makers who shape the movement and can influence the emergence of a new wave of sustainability? Again, in looking at overall trends we can begin to see where and what type of change is needed. We can define what a new wave of leadership might look like, and identify opportunities for leadership at all levels.

And finally, **what should we do?** There is already so much happening at the grassroots level (I was literally interrupted while writing this paragraph by Bullfrog Power salespeople at our door), so the real challenge is to find ways to be a catalyst for the positive trends that already exist.

Pull it all together, and we will have a transition strategy for Canada that will help us deal with the challenges ahead.

Our Evolving Movement

The first challenge in designing a new approach to environmentalism is, strangely enough, to figure out who we are. We have so many names for ourselves, which we use to distinguish our particular philosophy and approach. It gets quite confusing.

What do you call yourself: an environmentalist, an ecologist, a deep ecologist, a greenie, a conserver? Are you confused by all the different environmental terms? Relax, the bottom line is they all have the same goal in mind — that we need to live lightly on this earth.

Over the last fifty years or so, we’ve come up with a whole bunch of different ways to say the same thing. Here’s a quick guide to some of the different terms:

Term	Definition / Scope	Timeline
Conservation	Reducing our impact on nature and our consumption of natural resources	1900
Environmentalism	Protecting the environment from human activity	1970
Sustainable Development	Actions or development that will not harm ecosystems or deplete resources over time	1985
Green	Living in balance with the natural environment	1990
Natural	Actions or products based on natural processes	-
Eco-friendly	Actions or products that do not harm the environment	-
Climate-friendly Climate-neutral	Actions or products that do not contribute to an increase in carbon emissions or greenhouse gases	2000


They all mean pretty much the same thing, don’t they? So why do we have so many names to describe what is essentially the same thing? The bottom line is marketing – marketing ourselves, our organizations, and our movement. We all need to differentiate ourselves from the rest of the movement in order to attract membership, media, and money. As a result, there is no universally accepted term for our movement, which is unfortunate because it dilutes our marketing strength.

My own career has been in the field of conservation, the granddaddy of all terms. It’s been around for centuries and it has always served as a reminder that we cannot exceed the carrying capacity of our environment — whether it was the fertile lands of ancient Mesopotamia, or the entire climate. Conservation gave birth to the

FINDING OUR NAME

What’s in a name? That which we call a rose. By any other name would smell as sweet.

William Shakespeare



...there is no universally accepted term for our movement, which is unfortunate because it dilutes our marketing strength.

Conservation Society model in the 1970s (the precursor to sustainable development), it resonates with the public, and it's actually the only term you can conjugate: "I conserve, you conserve, he/she conserves, we conserve, you all conserve, they conserve!" Just try that with "sustainable development".

At the same time, I also recognize that conservation is yesterday's term, and that it has been narrowed down in scope over the years to mean nature conservation or energy conservation. In the end, you can use whichever term you wish. They are all pretty much interchangeable.

It is worth noting that each new term evolved to address the gaps and perceived inadequacies of its predecessors. Environmentalism filled the gap in the conservation movement that failed to deal with toxic pollution. The modern environmental movement was born around 1970, with groups like Pollution Probe and Greenpeace leading a wave of eco-activism focused on regulation and legislative interventions. Heightened environmental awareness in turn gave rise to the sustainable development movement of the 1980s, and the provincial and national Round Tables, which in turn paved the way for the green movement of the 1990s and the rise of new organizations like Evergreen Foundation and Earth Day that focused on public outreach and voluntary change.

There are some groups that have effectively managed to combine the voluntary and regulatory approaches, but for the most part the common bond between organizations is not so much the issues in common, but the methodology they employ.

The net result is that the environmental movement has fuzzy borders and nuanced approaches, and that's okay. Each term carries a slightly different connotation, but the end goal is the same: balancing people and the planet.

The Big Convergence

The difficulty in defining a movement's taxonomy extends far beyond the environmental sector.

In [Blessed Unrest](#) (2007), Paul Hawken maps the world's largest social movement which, he says, has no name, no leader, and no ideology, yet it involves more than 100 million people. He breaks through the labels of individual movements to find the common thread of a belief in a better and more just world. The curious thing is that once you name it, it has boundaries, can be isolated and attacked, or replaced by another name. Hawken wisely restrained from proposing a unifying name. Instead, he helped set up a massive online directory, www.wiserearth.org, that was launched on Earth Day 2007.

Wiser Earth developed an extensive movement taxonomy in order to help the global movement of people and organizations working toward


social justice, indigenous rights, and environmental stewardship to connect, collaborate, share knowledge, and build alliances. The description of these terms takes up over 100 pages of Blessed Unrest. By the time Wiser Earth [closed on Earth Day 2014](#) it had amassed 8 million pages of published content, 114,924 organizations listed in the directory, 80,000 members, and 3,000 working groups. In the end, the cost of maintaining such a vast online network was too much.

What does it mean, in practical terms, that we might all be part of a common social movement for a more just and benign human existence? First, it means that we are an ecosystem of social organizing: diverse, evolving, and healthy. Second, it means that were we ever to find true common cause we would be a formidable power.

Several years ago, when I was manager of a team of community animators under the City of Toronto's [Live Green Toronto](#) program, we made an interesting discovery. Nine animators were given the task of developing community action networks in each of the four quadrants of the city. They were to find the environmental groups, cultural associations, service clubs, faith groups, school clubs, neighbourhood social services, and community leaders who shared a common interest in green projects. What they found was a strong interest in issues that combined environmental, social and economic benefits. Put bluntly, people wanted community gardens where they could grow their own veggies, meet neighbours, and build community. We wanted projects that would help reduce their climate emissions; they wanted projects that would improve their lives. What we came up with were projects that did both.

Where there is a convergence of environmental, social and economic goals, or a convergence of personal and altruistic benefit, the chances of success are greatly enhanced. Through Live Green Toronto, we found we had strong allies in the United Way, local councillors, and neighbourhood agencies. Even though our mandates couldn't have been more different – from carbon emission reduction to cultural inclusion – we were able to find the sweet spot where our mandates converged.

The labelling and compartmentalization of projects still exists within governments and funders. Ministries tend to fund activities that measure and meet their specific priorities, and foundations and companies have developed specialized funds to support their own strategic objectives. Rarely are there integrated funds, although this may be beginning to change, as foundations like the Ontario Trillium Foundation are beginning to take a more integrated approach to funding.¹



...were we ever to find true common cause we would be a formidable power.

Mainstreaming

A sign of success is when a protest is accepted and incorporated into culture. It can also be a sign of failure.



[Profit from Punk](#): Johnny Rotten sells butter. Mainstreaming is a fine balance between adopting and assimilating a cause.

Back in 1982, as a student in Environmental Studies, I worked on a radio show on Punk, New Wave and Social Change for CBC Ideas.² In doing so, I talked with Scarborough new wave musician B.B. Gabor and record executive Brad Weir on how the punk movement was packaged and marketed to the North American market. Punk started as a protest movement, but as Brad Weir put it, the protest made no sense to suburban youth: “What do you want them to do? Go out and blow up their Lawn Boys?” Inevitably, the sounds of protest become appropriated by mainstream culture and eventually used to sell products, either in style or in person.

Sound farfetched for the environmental movement? Not at all. Yesterday’s protest is today’s initiative. It is a mark of success, but it can also become a managed, compromise solution. The protests against urban sprawl in Ontario in the late 1990s, for example, allowed for the introduction of the *Places to Grow Act*, which in turn allows for continued urban growth and the development of prime farmland, but in a more managed way.

Perhaps the best example of the challenge of mainstreaming is the concern over greenwashing. Terrachoice, now part of Underwriters Laboratory, has published a guide to the Seven Deadly Sins of Greenwashing, and an online quiz where you can test your skills at unmasking greenwashing³.

As problematic as mainstreaming may be, no one wants the environmental movement to remain on the fringe. It has to become mainstream to be successful. Which means that, in the end, the environmental movement cannot be non-governmental organizations alone. It has to include businesses, professions, politicians, civil servants, municipalities, provinces, and the federal government. It needs a clear national vision that can be implemented across the board.

As we will see, one of the key challenges for the Next Wave will be to ensure the credibility and sincerity of a widespread movement. All this to say, if we are looking to develop a new wave of sustainability we need to focus on finding areas of convergence:

- Build alliances and collaboration to achieve specific goals
- Find convergence with other causes
- Find solutions that allow us to live well without ruining the earth

The good news is that there are more people within our movement than there are without.

Looking Ahead to the Next Wave

The next wave will be defined by these key words: action, convergence, and empowerment.

The next wave will be defined by these key words: action, convergence, and empowerment. It will go beyond mainstreaming to define new approaches to achieving our individual and social goals of living a good life with less money, less resources, and less pollution.

I can say this with certainty, because the next wave is already here. The foundation has been laid, and key initiatives are already in place. What we are really looking for are ways to be a catalyst for this change – to help it happen through choice rather than by crisis.

A Focus on Action

The next wave of the environmental and sustainability movement will be focused on delivering solutions. It will amplify the green movement of the nineties and integrate new aspects of social ventures, fiscal responsibility, art and culture, and community development. Whereas the green movement was focused on the delivery of environmental products and services, the next wave will also focus on supportive government policy and fiscal incentives, and a renewed commitment to invest in the infrastructure for a sustainable future. The focus on action and public and consumer demand for solutions will be the driver for new policy and government leadership.

Increased Convergence

The trend towards convergence described above will likely play a strong role in defining the next wave. Indeed, the next wave will likely be seen more as a social movement than an environmental one. It will be founded in austerity, but we will refuse to accept that having less means sacrifice.

The defining initiatives of the next wave will be ones that help us live better with less – and the scope for innovation under that rubric is immense. Self-interest will shape the next wave much more than a sense of common purpose or ethics. The desire to live a good life, even in the face of job loss, lower wages, and rising cost of living, will shape the new agenda. The distinction between social, economic, and environmental movements will be replaced by a strong emphasis on integrated approaches that promote genuine progress and well-being.

A Philosophy of Empowerment

If the focus is on action, the overall philosophy is empowerment. Traditional economics and activism are focused on influencing, gaining and wielding power. With the next wave, however, the emphasis will be on empowering others – providing goods, services, and programs that help people live better with less. The old approach says we need action

on climate change, the new approach helps people save money by conserving energy and creates economic opportunities for renewable power. By focusing on empowering positive and voluntary change, the next wave will eliminate many of the roadblocks to action.

Leadership

All movements depend on leaders. They are the people who give voice to a movement, or who use their power and influence to facilitate action.


The next generation of leaders will be those who not only see the trends, but understand the causes and can see alternatives. Their solutions may be personal ones, entrepreneurial or charitable in nature, they may be policy or programs within government, or they may be funding programs, or they may be high-level strategic plans and collaborations.

The common element is that the next wave of leaders will be those who see opportunities to help us all weather the coming environmental, economic, and social storms. This change is already happening: the climate campaigners, for example, are realizing that fear is not the right message.⁴ The goal is not to replace the traditional environmental movement and the voices of protest against unfettered growth and greed, nor is it to divert what little funding remains from environmental causes into new directions. The goal has to be to open new avenues of growth and innovation, to channel economic and social development funding towards activities that are intrinsically sustainable and resource efficient. The goal is to encourage us all to invest in a renewed vision of Canada, both as a great place to live and as a world leader in promoting peace and a sustainable future.

In the end, there will be two types of leaders in this next wave: the innovators and the catalysts. The innovators are those with great ideas – a business, a project, a campaign, or new policy. These are the people who will turn the concepts into action. What is the definition of catalysts?

Who will be the catalysts? Herein lies the biggest challenge. There are possibly several hundred Canadians out of a population of 30 million who are in a position to truly help shape the next wave – be it locally, provincially, or nationally. Most are already leaders – in business, politics, government, or society. Most are already actively engaged in making Canada a better place. The question is whether they will see value in collaborating on a new vision and approach for Canada.

The next wave is, I believe, inevitable. It is already beginning to emerge organically. The big question is whether we can speed it up through either strategic high-level initiatives or a co-ordinated national strategy.



In the end, there will be two types of leaders in this next wave: the innovators and the catalysts.

Trends

Reading the tea leaves.

The most significant trends point to stormy times ahead. Understand these trends and the root causes, and we can devise more effective solutions.

Environmental Trends

Climate Change

First up, the big one. Climate change is the single most important environmental issue of the century, and at the heart of so many environmental trends. It is almost impossible to deny the reality of climate change, and the fact that we have caused it. But still people do.

Personally, I'm prepared to side with the overwhelming majority of scientists on this one. The significant scientific trend to follow is the one towards scientific certainty, as measured by statements from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (emphasis added):

2007⁵

The understanding of anthropogenic warming and cooling influences on climate has improved since the [Third Assessment Report], leading to **very high confidence**^[7] that the global average net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming

2014⁶

It is **extremely likely** that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.

In the precise language of scientists, "very high confidence" equals 90 - 100%, whereas "extremely likely" is 95 - 100%. In other words, the scientific trend is to increased certainty that climate change is real and that humans are the cause.

It is curious, though, the reasons why the seeds of doubt, and hence inaction, are so easily sown. This is no longer a question of science; it is one of popular culture. You have only to look around to understand that fear of the future has permeated our culture. Fortunately, so have the solutions. Listen not to the deniers, but to the artists and comedians, for they understand what is happening, they have the pulse of the nation.



Climate Change Time Capsule

[This Hour has 22 Minutes](#) takes us back with an early CBC interview on climate change.

It is the immediacy of the event and the human tragedy that we are drawn to, not the long-term effect on our society, economy, or natural environment.

Extreme Weather

The trend in weather patterns toward extreme events is hard to predict, except to say that we expect our weather will become more unpredictable. In other words, extreme is the new normal.

Some point to stalled weather systems as the cause, possibly linked to the changing polar vortex. Whatever the reason, it seems we are in for a bumpy ride.

Extreme weather events are happening worldwide. Wild temperature swings in Lapland (from -40°C to 10°C in just two days), exceptionally warm winters in Russia, extreme heat in Argentina resulting in power failures and water shortages, torrential rain and flooding in Brazil, snow in Cairo, and severe flooding in Kenya. That was just in December, 2013.⁷

There are a few agencies and websites that are attempting to keep a running tally on extreme weather, including the U.S. [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA), and the [Weather Underground](#).

Extreme weather events could easily fill an entire report. Instead, I have chosen to focus on a few signature events in Canada, America, and around the world. The most striking aspect of these events is how soon they become yesterday's news. It is the immediacy of the event and the human tragedy that we are drawn to, not the long-term effect on our society, economy, or natural environment.

The key trends to look for are not so much whether these extreme events are on the rise, which they appear to be, but the impact they are having on social awareness of climate change and the resulting commitment to support action.

The Polar Vortex: New to our lexicon in early 2014, many countries around the world felt the effects of a weaker jet stream as the Arctic air warmed at a rate twice as fast as the rest of the world. It was the temperature differential that caused the circumpolar vortex, which is the mass of cold air swirling counter clockwise around the Arctic. As the temperature difference weakens, the polar vortex weakens and becomes wavier.⁸ Hence the dips of Arctic air as far south as Texas and Florida.

The wild waves associated with the polar vortex are causing extreme weather patterns all around the northern hemisphere, not just in North America. Unusually warm weather in Alaska, and the storms and flooding in Great Britain are all connected to the changed air flow in the polar vortex.



The Polar Vortex: From climate extreme to [internet meme](#).

The Calgary Flood: A slow-moving weather system dumped 80 - 100 millimetres of rain in the Calgary area in early June, 2013. The Bow and Elbow rivers overflowed and Calgary was under water. One billion dollars in provincial aid was earmarked for the cleanup and restoration effort, spoiling the Alberta government's timeline for a balanced budget.⁹

The Not-So-Great Lakes: The Great Lakes have been losing water steadily for years now, resulting in the lowest levels for Lake Huron and Lake Michigan since records were first kept in 1918. Last year's cold winter and ice cover may help, but the impact of reduced rainfall and dredging for shipping means that the lakes are on a steady decline. It's hard to imagine Canada dry, but it has happened elsewhere with the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan¹⁰. Once the fourth-largest freshwater lake in the world, the Aral Sea has been reduced to just ten percent of its size due to the damming of its tributary rivers in the 1960s for cotton farming.

America Dry: We've long known that the American thirst for water is drying up the Ogallala aquifer, with the potential that eight states will run out of irrigation and drinking water by 2050,¹¹ but things have taken a turn for the worse with extreme drought conditions in California. 2013 was possibly the driest year on record for California, and even extreme rainfalls in March 2014 did little to replenish the drained reservoirs. In April of this year, all of California became an official drought zone.¹² California has set aside \$687 million for a drought relief plan and, as a result, food prices across North America were expected to rise by the fall of 2014.¹³


It's not hard to connect the dots.

Super Tornadoes: Tornado alley has always been known for its twisters but 2013 produced some big ones, including the largest tornado on record; the El Reno Tornado of May 31st measured 2.6 miles wide.¹⁴ An earlier EF5 tornado, on May 20th, tore through Moore, Oklahoma, resulting in 350 deaths¹⁵ and up to \$3.5 billion in insurance claims.¹⁶

Super Hurricanes: 2013 was the first season since 1994 with no major hurricanes.¹⁷ But don't let the lull fool you. 2005 was the most active year on record, with 28 named storms including Hurricane Katrina which devastated New Orleans and caused 1,200 deaths and \$108 billion in damage.¹⁸ 2010 through 2012 produced 19 named storms each year, including Hurricane Sandy which struck the east coast of the U.S., causing extensive damage and flooding in New York City and \$68 billion in damage.

British Rain: 2013-2014 was a wet, windy and wild winter in Great Britain, which saw the strongest tidal surge in 60 years, the stormiest December since 1969, the sixth wettest U.K. December, and the wettest January in recorded history.¹⁹ Insurers estimated the storms and flooding would result in claims totalling at least £500 million,²⁰ with overall costs reaching as high as one billion pounds.

Ongoing drought and chronic water shortages in the U.S. will increase pressures to divert Canadian water southward from the Great Lakes and rivers.



... people either accept that extreme weather is a real indication of the effects of climate change, or they vigorously deny any causal link.

Baked Australia: Australia has seen its share of extreme weather of all types, and the Australian government publishes a monthly weather review to summarize all the significant weather events.²¹ But it's the heat that everyone talks about. The record summer temperatures of 2013 continued into 2014, with 56 weather stations reporting record-breaking temperatures in January:

“January was yet another warmer-than-average month for Australia, and the eighteenth consecutive month (since August 2012) with temperature above the 1961–1990 average. The national area-averaged maximum temperature anomaly was +0.99 °C, the minimum temperature anomaly was +0.85 °C and the mean temperature anomaly was +0.92°C.”²²

The Social Response to Extreme Weather

Scientists and meteorologists are often reluctant to attribute individual extreme weather events to climate change. There are many factors at play, which makes it hard to make a definitive link from anthropogenic climate change to an F5 Tornado, a Category 5 Hurricane, or record heatwaves, floods, and droughts. This is beginning to change as a body of research emerges.²³

And as the evidence is laid out before us, how do we respond as a society? Do we believe it, or not?

First, there are those who have made it their profession to cast doubt on the evidence. On the subject of extreme weather, for example, the Global Warming Policy Foundation, founded by well-known climate skeptic Lord Nigel Lawson, published a report on the climate change – extreme weather link in which they say:

“Extreme weather is an inherent part of the Earth’s climate system,” and

“...a careful assessment of many well-publicized extreme weather events of the last ten years suggests that they are due to natural climate variability.”²⁴

If there are a handful of scientists who stand in the way of consensus, there are many more people and anonymous personas who are quick to speak up against the possible links between extreme weather and climate change. Consider this comment from “The Brat” following an excellent summary of 2013 extreme weather events by Christopher C. Burt on the wunderground.com website:

“Global warming is **NOT man-made** nor is it even remotely related! Just 15 years ago Scientists were extremely concerned over Global cooling! Anyone remember the 3 ships (2 of them ice -breakers) being stuck in hull crushing ICE in the Antarctic hundreds of miles before the global warming scientists

expected to even see Ice and that was just a couple months ago? Fact: there are **MORE** polar bears now than during the 1970s! Another Fact: The Chilean Volcano that erupted in 2011 spewed much more hazardous waste into our atmosphere within 15 minutes than ALL pollutants created by man since he has walked Earth! Also, doesn't it strike anyone funny that the Higher-ups in the scientific community walked out and QUIT the UN summit because of all the false misrepresented data the UN is using to Tax all the sheeple across the world using nothing but false info and fear mongering? One last thing Big Al Gore's whole scheme has been de-bunked 100% ! In his best-selling BS report "Inconvenient Truth" he used Nothing but staged photos and photo shopped pictures! *Wake up folks before the UN and Barry taxes you even more for all this **Nonsense!**"²⁵

Twenty years ago we had none of this. This is the first social trend associated with extreme weather worth noting: that as our experience with extreme weather mounts, there is a commensurate rise in 'concern trolling' – the use of negative public comments to discredit scientific information and rational dialogue. We can take it as a sign that the news is significant when climate deniers kick into high gear. Unfortunately, few media outlets including newspapers and websites have managed to implement a meaningful policy on trolling and anonymous online comments. The Toronto Star, for example, although it has a detailed [Community Code of Conduct](#) and will verify the authorship of all letters to the editor, allows anonymous comments to be posted online. The net result is that social media is being used effectively by those who wish to stand in the way of action on climate change.

It is an interesting side note that the [best online compilation](#) of extreme weather events comes from the believers. Not the believers in science and rational discourse, however, but those who believe extreme weather is a sign of the impending apocalypse. It shows just how much public support, or denial, of climate change appears to be based on deep-rooted beliefs and not evidence.

The second trend is the emergence of climate voyeurism – extreme weather events posted on You Tube and spread virally through social media or on internet TV. Nearly everyone has seen videos of the tsunamis in Indonesia and Japan. Storm chasers now have their own websites, such as [chasertv.com](#), and you can follow them live as they race through the American Midwest tracking down tornadoes. The internet is doing for extreme weather what television did to the Vietnam War – making it accessible and immediate. Extreme weather chasing is taking over from X Games. Webcasting extreme weather feeds into our consciousness of climate impacts, but whether it translates into support for climate action is unknown.

To many, weather is our enemy, and so too are the scientists who report it.



Weather Caught on Camera Full Episodes - DRG FS Tornado

[Storm chasing](#): extreme weather has become the latest extreme sport.

The bottom line is that if we rely on scientific research alone, then we are in an unwinnable debate, even if 99% of the science points to the need to act.



Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO): Climate Change De...

Laughter is the best strategy. Really, how can you expect to win a debate with people for whom the debate itself is victory? [John Oliver](#) has the right approach.

These two trends are of the same vein. To many, weather is our enemy, and so too are the scientists who research it.

The final, and most significant trend of concern to this paper, is the ever increasing economic costs associated with extreme weather. You may have noticed the damage costs of several of the above-mentioned examples of extreme weather. The insurance industry was one of the first economic sectors to recognize the reality of climate change.

[Munich Re](#), for example, has a full research section on the impacts of [climate change](#) and [natural hazards](#). Among Munich Re's findings: the number of weather-related loss events has increased by more than a factor of four over the past three decades, causing overall economic losses of around \$700 billion.²⁶

A recent report from TD Bank highlights the potential cost to the Canadian economy. The report points to an increase in natural disasters over the past three decades and estimates that the long-term financial impact of natural catastrophes to Canadians will be \$5 billion per year in 2020, and \$21-\$43 billion by 2050.²⁷ Meteorology will not win the climate war, nor will common sense. But economics just might.

Climate change and extreme weather are emotional issues. The reaction is visceral and with an overriding sense of fear and anger – fear of the power of nature and anger at either our economic and social myopia or at the environmentalists and scientists who dare to say it is of our own doing. Climate deniers have been able to tap into and fan these sentiments quite effectively. On the other hand, for those working to promote action on climate solutions, anger is not the best motivator for action. It is hard to sell a carbon tax to people who are angry at government.

If the negative emotions of fear and anger are the basis for action, then they need to be directed at those who are an impediment to action, and who are costing Canadians billions of dollars in infrastructure damage and increased insurance costs. If you want to build a campaign around the impact of climate change, target the deniers head on.

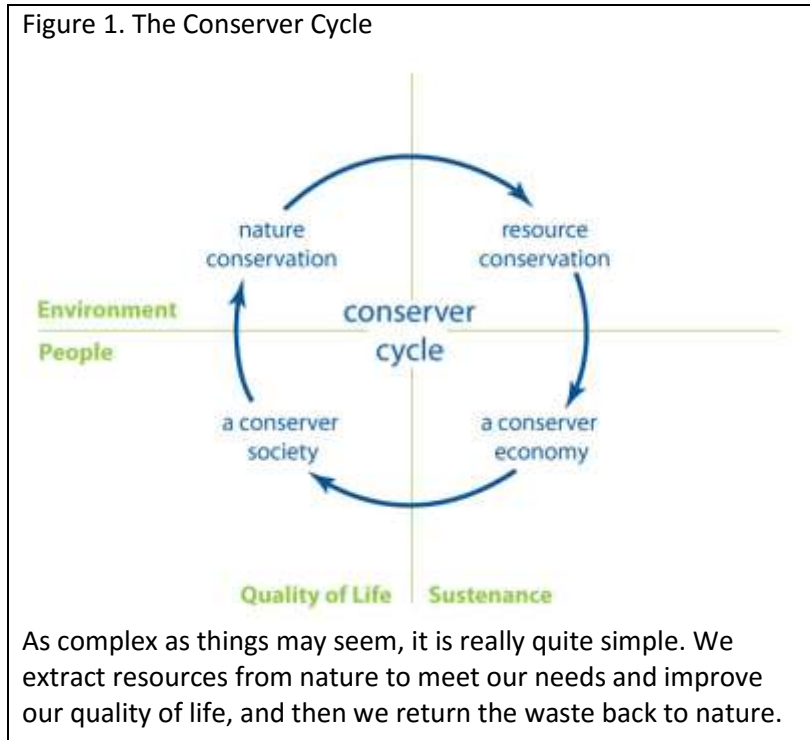
Resource Trends

Resources are the critical interface between the environment and the economy.

We extract resources from the environment to fuel our economy and meet the needs of society. Our choices with respect to resource extraction and use affect the viability of natural ecosystems. How efficiently we use and conserve these resources determines the long-term viability of our society.

The most significant trend with respect to resources is us.

Figure 1. The Conserver Cycle



Population Growth

The most significant trend with respect to resource consumption is us.

In 1800, there were one billion people on Earth. Now there are over 7 billion. Current projections have the world population reaching 9.5 billion by 2050, with the rate of growth slowly leveling off by the end of the century. The population of Canada in 1867 was nearly 3.5 million. Today, we are 35 million and still growing.

Coupled with increased affluence, the trend is towards increased resource consumption rates unless we can dramatically increase our efficiency or shift to renewable and sustainable sources.

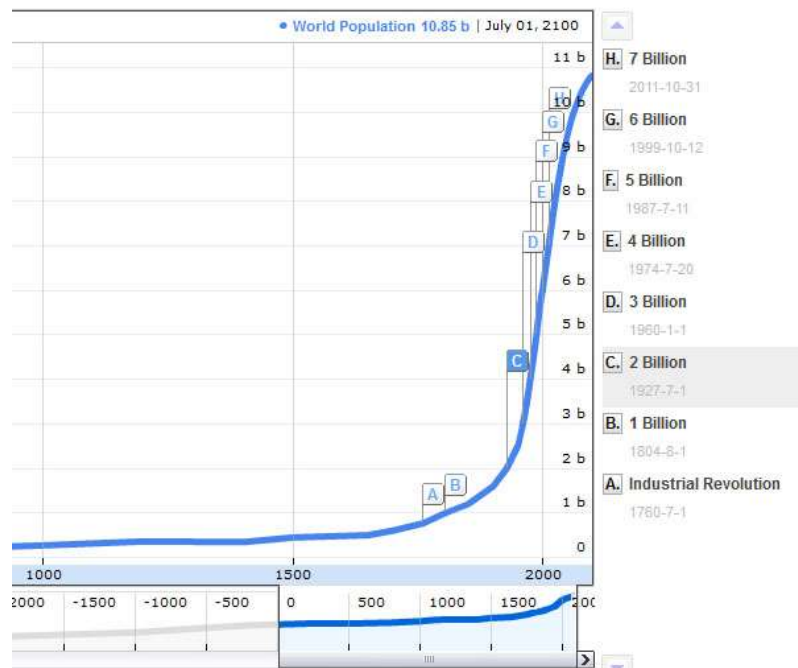
$I = PAT$ is a formula that is commonly used to show how environmental impact (I) is a factor of the size of the population (P), the degree of affluence of a society (A) and the technology used to meet the demands

The potential for a dramatic collapse in the global economy and food system is very high.

of the society (T).²⁸ We can lower the impact by any combination of a smaller population, a shift away from a consumer (i.e. more affluent) society, or by improving the efficiency of the way we meet these needs (including shifting to renewable resources).

After a period of intense debate during the 1970s and 80s, which included a near takeover of the Sierra Club in the United States by an anti-immigration faction, the prevailing wisdom with respect to curbing population growth is to focus on education and access to reproductive services in order to promote a higher quality of life and lower birth rates.²⁹

While fertility rates are declining, it is clear that global population levels will continue to rise, and the pressure on the natural environment and resources will continue to increase.³⁰ The potential for a dramatic collapse in the global economy and food system is very high.



Worldometers.info has a graph of population growth with a slider you can adjust to see how rapid our population growth has been over time. It's a rapid and exponential growth, no matter how you look at it.

Resource Scarcity

Scarcity adds value to a resource. This increased value in turn leads to several significant trends: an increased cost of living, increased profits for those who control the resources, increased pressure for the commodification of resources, and increased pressure to develop more remote resources.

Short-term scarcity through environmental disasters also adds value to resources. When a hurricane wipes out oil rigs and storage facilities in the Gulf of Mexico, does the price of oil rise or fall? The overall economic cost of extreme weather may be measured in billions, but the localized impact for savvy investors is a significant profit.

Savvy investors use scarcity as an indicator for growth. Phosphorous, potash, copper, water, farmland, forests, and precious metals are all on the list. There is some debate over whether we can equate known reserves of a resource to the total future supply, but there is a definite trend in investing in scarcity. We may not run out soon, but we know the price is bound to rise.

According to Jeremy Grantham of Grantham Mayo van Otterloo (GMO), the world is using up its natural resources at an alarming rate, and this has caused a permanent shift in their value. Grantham is described as “the world’s most powerful environmentalist” for the simple fact that his firm controls \$112 billion in investments and he is a leading champion of environmental sustainability.³¹

Exhibit 2
GMO Commodity Index: The Great Paradigm Shift



Source: GMO As of 2/28/11

[Business Insider](#) has an excellent summary of Jeremy Grantham’s research on resource scarcity, including this graph showing the dramatic rise in commodity prices.

From his perspective, the market gives a blunt assessment of resource scarcity. He opens his April 2011 quarterly newsletter with these words:

The purpose of this, my second (and much longer) piece on resource limitations, is to persuade investors with an interest in the long term to change their whole frame of reference: to recognize that we now live in a different, more constrained, world in which prices of raw materials will rise and shortages will be common.³²

Scarcity drives us to develop even more remote resources. As long as there is profit to be made in a barrel of oil, the pressure to develop is relentless. That pressure comes from the need for shareholder profit, the economic pressure to increase gross domestic product (GDP) in order to service national debt, the political pressure to show increased economic activity and job creation, and the social pressure to maintain our accustomed lifestyle.

Peak Energy

For two generations or more we have known cheap energy on demand. It is a comfort we take for granted. We know where our local gas stations are to fuel our cars and where to buy propane for our barbecues. The fuel for our homes is delivered either by natural gas pipelines, by tanker trucks, or via the electrical grid. We are fully dependent on a centralized development and distribution system. Only a very small few of us have any back-up system whatsoever.

We realize how vulnerable we are only during blackouts or other crises. We had our first global wake-up call during the energy crisis of the 1970s, which led to the National Energy Plan and the first wave of solar energy research and development. And we had another wake-up call across much of northeastern North America in the great blackout of August 14, 2003. You can trace Ontario's *Green Energy Act* back to those starry nights.

The real energy problem is not the supply of energy, but our blind ignorance of the untenable and unsustainable situation we are passing on to our grandchildren. We have built an urban infrastructure, transportation system, and economy that is entirely reliant on external energy, that is extremely inefficient, and that has few options for self-sufficiency.

The trends are telling. If we look at global energy consumption over the past two centuries, we see a rapid acceleration in consumption following World War II. Our consumption of energy over the past fifty years far outstrips our consumption of the past several centuries. The implications of this growth are increased scarcity, increased energy



Singer [Mike Ford](#) reminds us that there can be beauty in a blackout - [click and listen](#).

prices, increased pressure to develop contentious reserves, and increased environmental impacts from carbon emissions and spills.

There are positive trends in energy, particularly with respect to the price and capacity of renewable energy. Consider that, in the '70s, if you wanted a solar panel you had to browse through the Whole Earth Catalogue, mail order a kit, wait six weeks for delivery, and install it yourself. Now, you simply browse the internet, click on order, and the panel will be installed for you. In the 70s, solar was a major investment in a small piece of energy security. Today, you can make a return on your investment in less than seven years.

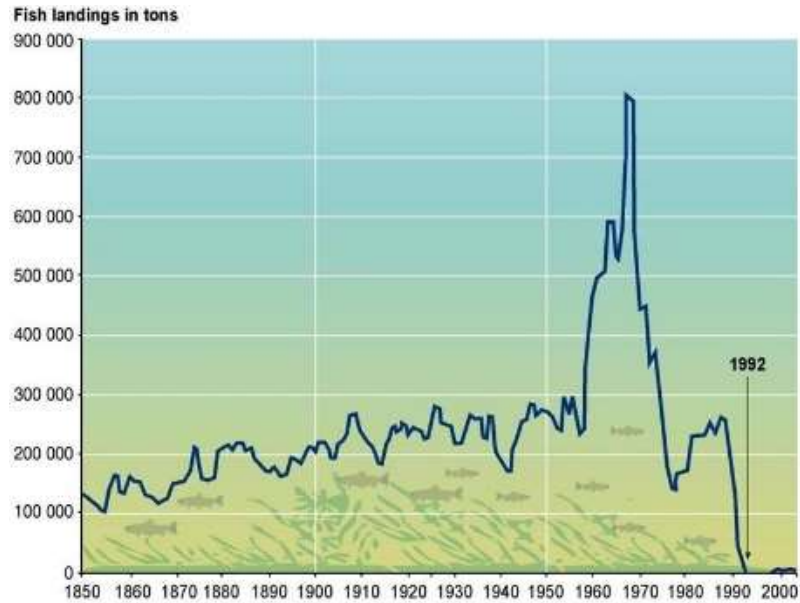
The cost of solar in particular is falling dramatically, and the environmental community is doing a great job of getting the message out in graphic form. For example, the following pictures are culled from the Facebook feeds of Kris Stevens (Executive Director at the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association) and Jim Harris (sustainability consultant):



Fisheries

Canada's major fishery, the cod fishery off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, collapsed in spectacular fashion in the early 1990s. International commercial fishing had dramatically increased the annual harvest to the point where extinction was imminent. Despite strict controls, the fishery has still not recovered, and federal scientists fear that the genetic stock has been weakened and the food chain disrupted to the point that it will take many more years for the species to recover.³³

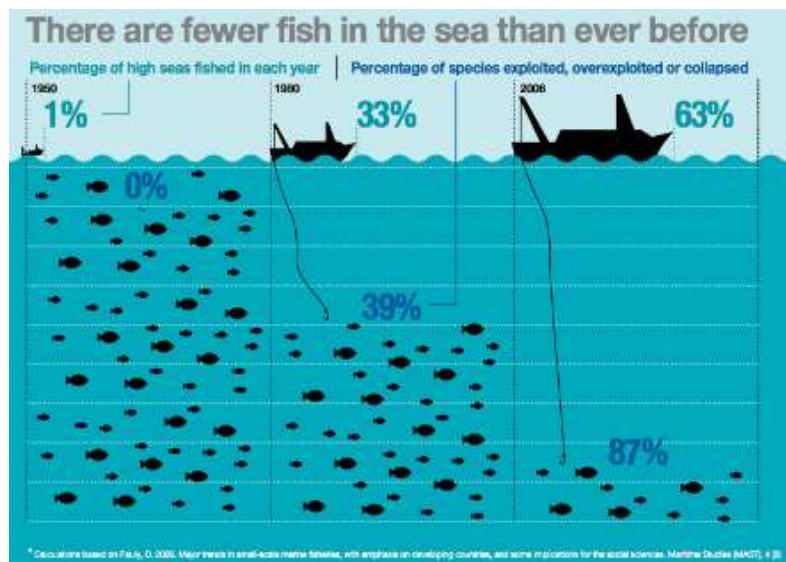
Around the world, unregulated fisheries are being depleted. A recent study from the Global Ocean Commission³⁴ points to an alarming decline in global fish stocks in just 50 years, the result of over \$27 billion in subsidies paid to keep unprofitable fishing fleets in operation. In short, we've been paying for the depletion of world fish stocks out of our own pockets.



Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

The collapse of the Atlantic cod stocks.

Source: [GRID-Arendal](#)



Eighty seven percent of fish species are exploited, overexploited, or collapsed.

Source: [Quartz](#) Graph: [Global Ocean Commission](#)

Economic Trends

It's hard to separate economic trends from the environmental ones. As we have already seen, extreme weather is driving up insurance and infrastructure costs, and resource scarcity is driving up commodity prices and the cost of living. On top of these trends, it is also worthwhile to look at two other trends: the rising national debt and the emerging consumer economy.

Global and National Debt

Perhaps the biggest environmental crisis we have is our national debt, for in the name of servicing and reducing our debt we need to continue developing resources in more remote locations and building more pipelines and roads to ship those resources to market.

In the more extreme examples, as we will see in the section on corporate trends, a country's inability to pay its debts can be used as a tool to negotiate favourable trade deals and access to natural resources.

In the U.S. the national debt now tops \$17 trillion, or \$54,000 per citizen. But people are also in debt, and thus the total U.S. debt (households, businesses and all levels of government) is over \$60 trillion.³⁵

In Canada, our national debt is \$686 billion, which translates into over \$19,000 per citizen.³⁶ By comparison, we Canadians are much better off than our neighbours to the south, but that is little cause for celebration.

Here's the thing. When we refer to a government or a nation's deficit and debt, we rarely make a distinction between operating and capital debt. We should, because not all debt is bad.

As individuals, we take out loans for long-term investments which are amortized and paid off over a number of years. The typical mortgage is amortized over 25 years and the principal and interest payments become part of our annual expenses. We measure our cash flow or solvency on an annual basis, or even by paycheque. If we can meet our living expenses, interest payments, and have something left over for saving or spending, we are doing fine. If not, something needs to change.

There are added complexities with governments, but the principle is the same: we should invest in our future, and we should be prepared to pay off those investments within a fixed period of time. If we cannot make ends meet on an annual basis, then we should either tighten the belt or increase revenue. Instead, annual operating deficits are added to the debt and lumped in with the investments in long-term infrastructure. The debt is never paid off – it is merely passed on to the next generation




Clarke and Dawe - European Debt Crisis

Australian comedians, [Clarke and Dawe](#), explain the European debt crisis.



\$1 Trillion & US Debt in Physical \$100 bills

Ever wonder what \$17 trillion looks like? [This video](#) starts with a single \$100 bill, and then zooms out to show what the U.S. national debt would look like as a stack of \$100 bills.



Less studied is the natural trend towards a conserver economy – living with less – and the impact that austerity is having on the transition to a green economy.

in the expectation that growth in the economy, population, and tax base will ensure that the burden on the individual remains relatively unchanged even though the overall number increases exponentially.

The Emerging Conserver Economy

Sustainable development and the green economy are two dominant approaches to solving the problem of an exploitative and exponential growth economy. The former works from within conventional business, the latter from without.

There is no shortage of initiatives in support of the transition to a new economy. Internationally, there is the [United Nations Green Economy Initiative](#), and an international [Green Economy Coalition](#). Both the [federal](#) government and the [Quebec](#) government have a sustainable development strategy. There are also joint efforts, a blue-green alliance, between labour and environmental groups in both [Canada](#) and the [United States](#). In key areas, such as renewable power and sustainable agriculture, there is a burgeoning counter economy that already provides a viable alternative to the conventional economy.

A more recent economic movement is ‘degrowth’ – a revival of the limits to growth argument. By whatever name we choose, there is some excellent research on the ways that governments can support the transition to a green economy. As economists Peter Victor and Tim Jackson suggest in *Green Economy at Community Scale*, the economy is not an end unto itself, it is a means towards a shared and lasting prosperity.³⁷ They focus on the quality of work through community ventures and jobs worth having as the cornerstone for a new economy, and look to the types of investments and incentives that will stimulate the transition to this new economy.

Of late, the economy has been dogged by recession, global debt, and economic scandal. Future prospects aren’t much rosier. As a result, the millennials (those born after 1980) are likely to be the first generation since the Great Depression to have to deal with a shrinking economy and less wealth. The choices they make in housing, transportation, recreation, and food, will shape the future economy far more rapidly than government incentives.

In particular, there are three trends to watch for associated with a conserver economy, from the drastic to the gradual:

- **Radical downsizing:** the collapse of local and regional economies due to downsizing or migration of major employers and increased unemployment.
- **Gradual austerity:** a change in purchasing behaviour due to decreasing incomes.
- **Shifting values:** a change in social behaviour to less consumptive activities.

Radical downsizing is the most visible and disruptive form of a shift to a conserver economy. A major employer downsizes or folds, moves its facility to another country, or outsources production to countries with cheaper labour. The ripple effect across the entire community is extreme, and the regional economy as a whole suffers. And if the economy suffers, so too does government revenue and the ability to service the debt. As a result, governments frequently entice businesses to stay through loans and investments, or through subsidized energy costs.

Gradual austerity is the result of a steadily increasing cost of living and higher unemployment. As a result, consumers make choices to reduce their expenses. The luxuries of entertainment and travel are early casualties, followed by changed purchasing behaviour for major expenses such as cars and housing.

We saw dramatic evidence of the impact of austerity during the economic recession of 2008 – 2010.³⁸ In this instance, consumer austerity led to radical downsizing as a significant rise in fuel prices led to a sharp downturn in SUV sales. The North American auto industry, which had pegged its future growth on bigger cars, went into a tailspin. A \$14.4 billion bailout from the federal and Ontario governments was required in order to avert a \$20 billion loss to the economy.³⁹

The traditional government response is to attempt to restore the economy to what it was; to attract back the business that left, or to find a replacement big company. Few, if any, governments look to a diverse and decentralized green economy to replace the major employers. It may be more resilient in the long run, but it is harder to quantify and therefore harder to sell to the electorate.

Shifting values is the ability to adapt to austerity. As individuals, we can find pleasure in walking, riding bicycles, or taking transit. We can enjoy slow food, prepared in our own homes and perhaps grown in our own gardens. We can enjoy local recreation and tourism. We might even invest in these values by paying extra for green power and home insulation, organic produce, or local stores. In the end, we will probably find that people are far more resilient than economies.

Austerity and shifting values are consumer-driven trends. Oddly enough, although consumer choice is the driving force behind the emergence of an alternative green economy, consumers have been largely overlooked by the sustainable development sector which focuses largely on market transformation. The green market caters to a niche with green values, and sustainable development instils green values into the conventional economy. Neither approach embraces austerity, and therein lies the potential problem.


Our economy depends on consumerism. In times of recession, when retailers feel the pinch, consumers are called upon to shop the economy back into health. This is the ‘trickle up’ approach to economics: if

...the millennials (those born after 1980) are likely to be the first generation since the Great Depression to have to deal with a shrinking economy and less wealth.



MACKLEMORE & RYAN LEWIS - THRIFT SHOP FEAT WAN...

Who'd have figured that a conserver economy would be featured in a hit rap song, "[Thrift Shop](#)"?



Austerity does not necessarily mean a decline in quality of life, but it does call for a shift in what we value.

enough people buy goods and services, the speed of the economy picks up and the revenue is invested back into the economy through jobs. A great idea, if you afford it. But what if you can't?

Consider dinner. Your choices are: 1) eat out, 2) buy groceries and cook at home, or 3) eat the food you grew in your backyard or community garden. In general, option 1 powers the local economy, option 2 less so, and option 3 makes no contribution to the economy except perhaps for the pack of seeds you bought three months ago. Good restaurants and cafes are part of the lifeblood of a community, and an important contribution to your quality of life. But consider also that a home cooked meal with food you grew yourself is also one of the most pleasurable experiences. Austerity does not necessarily mean a decline in one's quality of life, but it does call for a shift in what we value.

The Slow Food movement has pretty much figured this out. You can be part of the slow food movement whether you eat at restaurants or at home, or whether you purchase or grow your food. As its [website says](#), the movement was founded "to counter the rise of fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world."

If food is a cornerstone of the economy, so too is energy. Consider your transportation options for going to the restaurant or grocery store. You can: 1) go by car, 2) take transit, or 3) ride a bike or walk. Option 1 is the most expensive but often the most convenient choice. Option 2 is much cheaper but less convenient, and option 3 is the cheapest and best exercise, although often the most inconvenient.

With cheap energy to power a strong economy and high wages, having a car was affordable and natural. Suburban sprawl meant that having several cars per family was a necessity. The first impact of the recession was a dramatic shift to compact, fuel-efficient cars and the rise of car-sharing companies. The longer term impact is a shift in housing and urban design back to compact, vibrant village design.⁴⁰

The economy is slowing down. Conventional economists will see this as a bad thing. Others will see it as inevitable, and as the opportunity to shift our economy to align with the social desire for a high quality of life. The transition may be painful, but the individual's ability and desire to live a good life will shape new economic opportunities.

Like the slow food movement, a conserver economy is a slow economy that is focused on quality of experience. Contrary to the popular belief that a conserver lifestyle is one of sacrifice and shivering in the dark, we will likely discover that while the impact on the conventional consumer economy will be significant, the impact on society might actually be positive.

This change is already happening with the rise of the sharing economy – businesses and social ventures that promote sharing over individual

ownership. Car-sharing was perhaps the first sector, starting with [Autoshare](#) in Toronto in 1998 and now with multiple companies across Canada. [Bikesharing](#), [tool libraries](#), and home rental websites like [AirBnB](#) and [Sabbatical Homes](#) have expanded the sharing economy into new areas.

The sharing economy is based on the notion that we don't need to own everything, and that those things we do own we can share with others. It shows we can live better by sharing. Definitely a trend to watch.

At the heart of western society is the belief that economic growth will create wealth and stability for everyone. What is good for business is good for us all. In our hearts, we know this is not always true, yet it is a cornerstone of our social and political system. It is what makes us, at the end of the day, a capitalist system.

With respect to business, the most significant factor is not as much the rise of a green economy as it is the struggle to maintain ethics in capitalism. On the one hand, we have witnessed a strong trend towards increased business pressure in setting government and social priorities, and on the other hand we have seen strong business leadership in promoting environmental and social responsibility. What this means is that businesses and business leaders are as varied as the rest of us, and what we need are better tools to support the trend towards stronger ethics in business.

The challenge for those of us on the outside – the public and consumers – is to filter through the marketing spin to figure out what the ethical choices are. And the answer isn't always clear.

Unbridled Greed

In *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, John Perkins lays bare the American corporate plan to conquer the world and become fabulously rich in the process. It is an amazingly simple approach to the complex challenge of global domination. As an economic consultant, he helped set in motion a chain of events by inflating the economic growth projections for various countries around the world. Countries are then advised to use World Bank loans to finance infrastructure projects that are carried out by American companies. When the economic growth fails to materialize, the country cannot meet the debt payments and is required to make concessions, such as allowing an American air base or access to resources. The companies and CEOs are the elite of corporate greed, and they are closely tied with politics.

This is the worst of capitalism, and we would love to think it is the work of a few power-hungry individuals and companies, but towards the end of the book, Perkins brings it home, starting with the impacts:

The real story is that we are living a lie. ...we have created a veneer that hides the fatal cancers beneath the surface. These cancers are exposed by the x-rays of our statistics, which disclose the terrifying fact that history's most powerful and wealthiest empire has outrageously high rates of suicide, drug abuse, divorce, child molestation, rape, and murder, and that like a malignant cancer, these afflictions spread their tentacles in an ever-widening radius every year. In our hearts, each of us feels the pain. We cry out for



Confessions Of An Economic Hitman (1 of 3)

[John Perkins](#) explains the close connection between business and international development. [Click for the video](#) - the first two minutes summarizes the whole approach.

*change. Yet, we slam our fists to our mouths, stifling those cries, and so we go unheard.*⁴¹

To that list you can add the statistics of consumption, resource exploitation and depletion, habitat loss and extinction, and climate change. It would be all well and fine, Perkins continues, if we could simply blame the whole mess on the conspiracy of a few powerful individuals and companies. But it's not that easy:

We would rather glimpse conspirators lurking in the shadows, because most of us work for one of those banks, corporations, or governments, or in some way are dependent on them for the goods and services they produce and market. We cannot bring ourselves to bite the hand of the master who feeds us.

*...How do you rise up against a system that appears to provide you with your home and car, food and clothes, electricity and health care – even when you know that the system also creates a world where twenty-four thousand people starve to death each day and millions more hate you, or at least hate the policies made by representatives you elected? How do you muster the courage to step out of line and challenge concepts you and your neighbors have always accepted as gospel, even when you suspect that the system is ready to self-destruct?*⁴²

These are disturbing words to read, for they are challenging each of us as we read them to reflect on our own comfort and security. This is part of the cognitive dissonance between our values and our lives.

Perkins is an American and, as such, is far more exposed to the extremes of power, corruption, and global backlash than we are in Canada. But we travel the same path, our policies and economics are closely tied to those in the U.S., and our culture and politics are becoming more and more American in style. If we are to look at a new wave in leadership in Canada, we cannot ignore either the rise of the corporatocracy (Perkins' term) in Canada, or our own complicit role as employees and consumers.

The Arms-Length Economy

The very nature of business is profit, but the changing nature of the economy is changing the way business makes money.

In the beginning, the economy was tactile. People made things or did things with their hands and sold their products and services. This is still the backbone of any economy: processing resources and performing services.

The cerebral economy – teaching, faith, research, and arguably the arts – is made possible by a successful tactile economy. It is an essential

...we travel the same path, our policies and economics are closely tied to the U.S., and our culture and politics are becoming more and more American in style.

It is only within the last half century that we have seen the meteoric rise of the investment economy combined with rapid growth in global GDP.

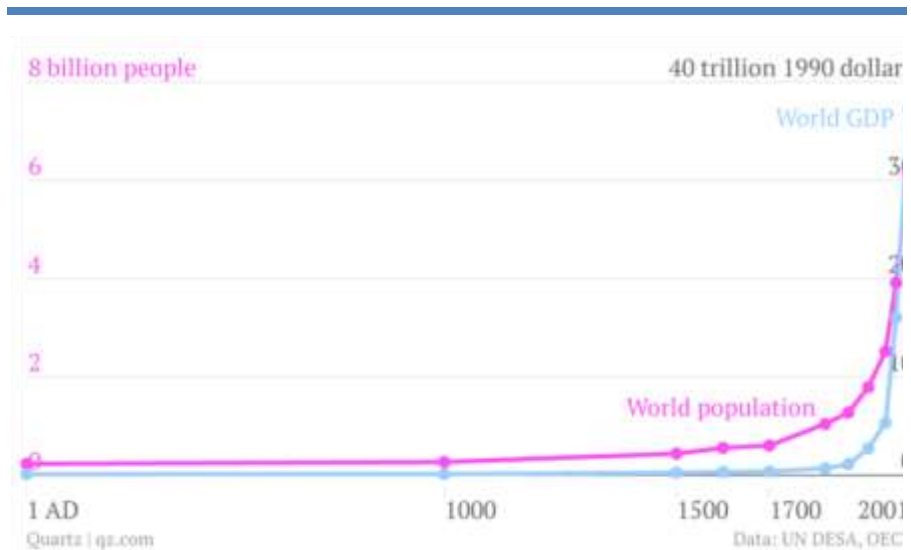
luxury for an advanced society, but also an early casualty in times of austerity.

It is only within the last half century that we have seen a meteoric rise of the investment economy combined with rapid growth in global GDP. It is a new economy, a tactile-cerebral hybrid, arms length from the resources upon which it is based, but able to aggregate and concentrate immense wealth. This rise in GDP is more than can be explained by the rise of the white collar worker from 18% to 60% of employees over the course of the 20th century;⁴³ it is the transformation of wealth from aggregated production to speculative investments.

The size of the world's stock markets at the end of 2013 was a staggering \$64 trillion (U.S.).⁴⁴ On a personal level, almost every adult in Canada has part of their wealth and pension tied up in stocks and our future security is dependent on the health of the stock market.

Stock value, dividends and bonuses drive this economy. Millionaires are made through marginal growth and the impact on nature, resources, and future generations is immense, but it is external to the decision-making process.

Despite efforts to incorporate sustainability and ethics into investment decisions, this is a difficult, if not impossible, trend to change, and it will likely continue until the economy and the market collapses due to resource scarcity.



Growth in world GDP and population: the astronomical growth in GDP is both recent and unsustainable. Source: Quartz

Corporate Responsibility

There are some interesting counter trends, from the Ceres Principles some 25 years ago to the creation of the B Team in July, 2013 and a long list of certification programs. They are a part of a strong global movement for sustainable development.

Responding to the challenge of climate change, a number of Canadian companies have made the bold commitment to become climate neutral. There is a booming business in carbon offsets which offer companies and individuals the opportunity to offset their emissions by investing in alternative energy, conservation, and carbon sinks (forests). These initiatives are happening in advance of potential regulations on carbon pricing and emission caps, and the benefits are good public relations and demonstrated corporate responsibility.

Increasingly, corporations are becoming aware of the connections between the environment, resources, and economic wealth. As a result, much of the leadership on environmental sustainability in Canada is coming from the corporate sector, be it the [CivicAction](#) initiative in Toronto, issue-based funding such as the [RBC Blue Water Project](#) or the longstanding commitment to community funding through the [TD Friends of the Environment Foundation](#).

The B Team is a not-for-profit initiative formed by a global group of leaders to create a future where the purpose of business is to be a driving force for social, environmental and economic benefit. Their mission is “to catalyse a better way of doing business for the wellbeing of people and the planet.” Their initiatives include the Carbon War Room and the We Mean Business coalition that seeks to develop economic opportunity in tackling climate change.

On a smaller scale, there is the rise of B Corporations – the B stands for benefit. B Corps are certified by the non-profit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. There are over 1,000 Certified B Corps from more than 30 countries and 60 industries working together toward the unifying goal: to redefine success in business. In 2011, B Lab partnered with MaRS Discovery District in Toronto to support the B Corp community in Canada, and in March, 2014, the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) became the first Canadian financial institution to receive B Corp certification and the 100th Canadian company to join the international B Corp community.

One hundred companies is still a drop in the corporate bucket, but it is reassuring to see there is a foundation for rethinking the definition of a successful business.



Increasingly, corporations are becoming aware of the connection between the environment, resources, and economic wealth. As a result, much of the leadership on environmental sustainability in Canada is coming from the corporate sector...

Governance Trends

If we have lost faith in democracy, we are also losing faith in government.

It is widely recognized that there is a decline in public faith and trust in government. Voter turnout in federal elections has declined ten percent in the last decade.⁴⁵ We don't trust our politicians, and we don't feel our tax dollars are being spent wisely and effectively. These are the trends, but are they justified?

In 2009, Elizabeth May dissected the decline in good governance in her book, *Losing Confidence: Power, Politics and the Crisis in Canadian Democracy*.⁴⁶ The decline in civility, the decay of due process, the rise of negative ads, RCMP intervention, media control, and the increase in corporate lobbying and political donations are all covered in her book. And her book was written before the robocall scandal, proroguing parliament, omnibus bills, and charity chill of the last few years. Surely a sequel is in the works.

If we have lost faith in democracy, we are also losing faith in government. The former is a result of the growing sense that politicians are acting more out of self-interest than out of concern for the interest of society. The latter is a result of the growing dissatisfaction with how governments spend our money. These are not necessarily complementary concerns shared by all, but they do combine to create a particularly dysfunctional situation.

If we want to restore faith in governance, we need to restore the principle of social service to politics, and the principle of cost-effectiveness to government. From the left to the right wings of political ideology, we need to ensure both the social and fiscal responsibility of our governments.

Principle or Power

Is it naïve to believe in principles?

Politics is a power game dressed up in principles. The backroom lobbying, deal making, and election trickery can make a mockery of the proud words spoken over the teleprompter. All parties start from the expression of principles,⁴⁷ all leaders justify their actions through values and principles.

Principles are what allow us to sleep at night: the belief that whatever action you might have taken or condoned during the day was done for noble reasons. For this reason, the greatest power comes from holding the highest moral ground.

Principles are regularly used as a mask for power and control. Every law, every budget, every contentious issue, and every election is fought on the battleground of principles. Never will a politician or government say,

“Really, this is all about making us rich or powerful,” but in the end that’s what it often boils down to. At the extreme, countries invade others under the pretense of democracy and freedom. Never do they admit it’s about power and access to resources.

Principles are the words we clothe our actions in. Without them, our actions can be exposed for what they are: either honest compassion or raw ambition.

The decline in voter interest in politics is probably the strongest indicator that the public doesn’t buy the spin. We want to see a return to honesty and integrity in politics. The problem is, “honesty” and “integrity” are two of those wonderful principles that have become overused and abused in recent years.

It may be naïve to believe in principles, but it is even more naïve to believe that principles have no place in politics.

Selling principles

So what happens when a political leader starts from a strong position of principle? If the policies are not in tune with the times, the result can be catastrophic.


As a rule, politicians fear the environment. It can lose them elections but rarely will it win one. The environment is always a crisis waiting to happen: an oil spill, a nuclear accident, an ice storm, a flood, e-coli, or any other pollutant or extreme event. If they show leadership in times of crisis, as did Calgary’s mayor Naheed Nenshi during the 2013 flood, they come out ahead. If, however, the government’s actions and policies are seen to have contributed to the event, be it through a lack of action or cuts to government services, then the electorate may punish them at the polls.

While voters are quick to blame governments for failing to contain environmental damage, they are loathe to support environmental leadership.

In the 2008 federal election, for example, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion unveiled his *Green Shift* plan for Canada, which included a call for a carbon tax. The plan was denounced by both the Conservative and NDP parties as being a tax that would hurt consumers.⁴⁸ This was all predictable politics in an election, but how would the public respond?

Midway through the election, Hurricane Ike - a giant Class 2 hurricane - stormed through the Gulf of Mexico. Ike knocked out oil production facilities in the Gulf as well as land-based oil storage facilities. Gas prices in Canada rose about 13 cents a litre overnight. It was a golden opportunity to link climate change and extreme weather to the need to reduce our oil dependency. Instead, Liberal MPP Dan McTeague, a long-

While voters are quick to blame governments for failing to contain environmental damage, they are loathe to support environmental leadership.



The chill runs deep, and its roots can be traced back to the initial austerity measures of the late 1980s.

time consumer champion, attributed the rise in price to market manipulation saying, "it has nothing to do with weather."⁴⁹

We can't depend on brave political leadership alone to save the day. Politics is too messy.

The Big Chill

Government of today bears little resemblance to the government I knew when I first started out in the conservation movement, some 30 years ago. The chill runs deep, and its roots can be traced back to the initial austerity measures of the late 1980s.

Much of this has been going on behind the scenes. I can find no data on this, just personal experience and personal communications with people in the civil service who talk of a radical cultural shift in the civil service, the result of years of pressure. You will have to take my word on this, balance it with your own personal observations, or with those being collected by the Voices – Voix project.⁵⁰

Thirty years ago, the bureaucracy was held in high esteem. Government scientists were a trusted source of independent information and government staff played a key role in the development of policy. There was a strong synergy between the bureaucracy and politicians in the development and implementation of policy. NGOs were consulted on a regular basis, and often funded on the basis of their mission. The formation of provincial and federal round tables on the environment and the economy in the late 1980s was perhaps the high point of co-operation between government and stakeholders.

There were early signs of changing priorities and relationships in the early 1990s, but the rise of the Common Sense Revolution in Ontario signaled a new, ideological approach to governance which has since transitioned to the federal government. The political pressure was dramatic, but it would be a mistake to lay the blame entirely on the political masters. There were strong external pressures as well, and the politicians were the voice of the social pressure for increased accountability and *respect* for taxpayers.

The pressure for increased accountability has resulted in increased reporting requirements for government funding, with the net effect that fewer projects are being approved and much more time is being spent on gathering and reporting results. Whereas branch directors were once able to approve projects up to \$25,000, they are now unable to authorize any outside projects. Even if they could, the budgets have been stripped back to the bone.

The decline in political civility is to blame as well. *Gotcha* politics means that no one dares take a risk. In this environment, it is hard to expect government to provide the leadership to address climate change, resource scarcity, or a sustainable economy. We will need to look

elsewhere for leadership and work to create a new social climate where government is rewarded for engaging with stakeholders and supporting innovation.

Government Leadership

In spite of the negative trends in governance, there remains a strong commitment to leadership and service within government. Working within ever growing political and fiscal constraints, government departments and ministries continue to produce and implement strategies and plans that are designed to improve our lives and address the priority issues of the day.

Each government has at least one high level environmental or sustainability strategy. The purpose of a high level strategy is to communicate priorities and to integrate the complexity of government legislation, policies, programs and offices into a common approach. In reality, the strategies are also statements of political commitment.

The key trend with respect to the use of high-level strategies is that many of these initiatives now suffer from 'flash and fizzle', whereby a bold early vision gets weakened through the bureaucratic and political process of turning commitments into action. This is perhaps a natural side effect from the overall political trends toward marketing over substance.

There has, however, been some positive progress. Over the past 40 years, ever since the World Conservation Strategy (1980) and the World Commission on Environment and Development (1986), provincial and federal governments have been wrestling with environmental leadership and the challenges of integrating environmental values into the Canadian economy and society. High level environmental strategies have been around since the early days of sustainable development. Perhaps the most memorable one was the federal Green Plan of 1990, which promised \$3 billion in funding for environmental programs.

Currently, almost all provinces, territories and the federal government have a senior environmental strategy of one kind or another. In particular, there are thirteen climate strategies, five sustainable development strategies and one nature conservation strategy that are given prominence (see the chart on the next page).

At least six provinces have backed up their strategies with legislation, which is an important safeguard against shifting political agendas and priorities:

- Nova Scotia, the [*Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*](#)
- British Columbia, the [*Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*](#)
- Manitoba, the *Green Prosperity Act*
- Newfoundland, the [*Sustainable Development Act*](#)

- Quebec, the [Sustainable Development Act](#)
- Saskatchewan, [The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act](#)

The federal government and Ontario are the only jurisdictions with independent environmental commissioners who have a mandate to report on government progress. Ontario’s Environmental Commissioner is mandated to produce annual reports on climate change and energy conservation as well as an overall environmental performance review.

Unlike legislation, which often has a mandated review, few jurisdictions provide a regular review process whereby their strategies can be improved and renewed. Most provide progress reports, in particular for the climate strategies, but not the ability to update and strengthen the overall targets and strategy.

Very few jurisdictions provide significant funding or incentives for conservation. Many, such as Ontario and B.C., provided early funding for community engagement, but these funds were limited and not renewed.

High Level Strategies Across Canada

Jurisdiction	Plan	Principle Focus
Federal	Planning for a Sustainable Future	Sustainability
	National Conservation Plan	Nature
Alberta	Climate Change Strategy	Climate
B.C.	Climate Action Plan	Climate
Manitoba	Tomorrow Now	Green / Climate
New Brunswick	Climate Change Action Plan	Climate
Newfoundland	Charting Our Course	Climate
	Sustainable Development Act	Sustainability
N.W.T.	Greenhouse Gas Strategy	Climate
Nova Scotia	2020 Vision	Sustainability
	Towards a Greener Future	Climate
Nunavut	Setting the Course	Climate
Ontario	Go Green	Climate
P.E.I.	Planning for a Sustainable Future	Sustainability
	Prince Edward Island and Climate Change	Climate
Quebec	Sustainable Development Strategy	Sustainability
	2020 Climate Change Action Plan	Climate
Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Energy and Climate Change Plan	Climate
Yukon	Climate Change Action Plan	Climate

High Level Climate Strategies

Twenty years ago, virtually every province and territory in Canada had a sustainability strategy. Now they all have climate strategies.


As part of the background research for this report, I reviewed Canada's high-level climate strategies to compare their structure and approach to what has become Canada's premier environmental challenge.⁵¹ For a more detailed independent review of the progress made by these strategies, see the 2012 report from the David Suzuki Foundation, *All Over the Map*.⁵²

Some of the key findings from my review are:

1. **The strategies lack a positive vision.** Only five have a vision statement, and they deal primarily with the vision of mitigating or adapting to climate change.
2. **Only about one-half have a strong legislative component,** be it targets, emission standards, fiscal measures, or reporting.
3. **Fiscal measures are generally weak,** especially for promoting energy conservation. Quebec is one of the leaders, with revenue from its carbon market to go support projects under a provincial Green Fund.
4. **Most of the climate strategies recognize the need for government-wide action.** Again, Quebec shows a strong level of integration across government ministries and ministry strategies.
5. **Partnerships and engagement are weak.** Primary emphasis is on internal government initiatives.
6. **Public consultation is generally good,** but it only happens at the beginning of the planning process. Climate strategies do not seek to engage citizens in dialogue about our future (with the notable exception of Nunavut).
7. **Reporting is inconsistent.** Some provinces report annually, some sporadically, and others not at all.

The major conclusion is that, while Canada's climate strategies have significant weaknesses, they are vitally important to the sustainability movement. The suite of climate strategies are a recognition, even if only reluctantly, that life as we know and enjoy it cannot continue indefinitely. The important work that began with Canada's sustainable development strategies and green plans is being continued under a new name. This is an important starting point for the dialogue about our common future.

...while Canada's climate strategies have significant weaknesses, they are vitally important to the sustainability movement.



Overall, environment and sustainability are still marginalized.

Communicating Priorities

The other question of interest is how well governments are communicating their environmental and sustainability priorities to the public. It's one thing to have a strategy in place, it's another thing entirely for the issue to be integrated into government communication priorities.

As a second background research project, I conducted a web-based review of the provincial and national government websites to determine the degree to which action plans are in place and prominently promoted to help citizens “live better with less.”⁵³ The review was as much to determine the visibility of government commitment to implement solutions that can help people live better with less, from integrated sustainable development plans to tangible investments in a sustainable society and economy, including urban design, good food, transit, safe cycling, green power and a local economy.

This is a summary of the findings:

- There is a consistent structure to all government home pages in that they serve two main functions:
 1. To connect people with information they need
 2. To promote the region and government initiatives
- With respect to promoting environmental and sustainability initiatives, several sites had links to recent high-level strategies. Most of them are part of the news feed, but a couple (the federal government and Northwest Territories) had ads promoting environmental and sustainability initiatives.
- Very few governments had an overall vision for their jurisdiction. The notable exception is the Northwest Territories, which has links to a Vision and a Progress report on its home page.
- A couple of governments have links to pages that encourage public consultation and engagement. The government of British Columbia, for example, has a website dedicated to both public consultation and opportunities to get involved in building your community. In general, the integration of public consultation into government websites could be significantly improved.
- Most governments have action plans related to priority issues (such as climate change, sustainable development, the economy, health, food, education, public transit, or urban development). Very few of these plans are given prominence on the government's home page. The best of the sites surveyed was the federal government, which promotes its Economic Action Plan and its Conservation Plan on the

home page and on ads throughout the federal government website.

- Very few governments provide summary reports on trends and results. Statistics Canada has a wealth of information on national and provincial statistics, but this information is poorly communicated through government websites.
- Overall, environment and sustainability are still marginalized. Even obvious solutions like reducing energy bills through conservation are not highlighted or supported on the government home page list of services. Government social marketing and incentives are on the decline due to budget cuts, which means that support is just not available or it has been offloaded to external agencies.

We can expect that, as environmental impacts, rising costs, and economic uncertainty continue to grow, the pressure to provide new solutions will grow. The progressive governments will seek to give greater attention and prominence to information, services, and incentives that will help people live better with less.

The Bottom Line

If we can address the underlying decline in governance, government plans and strategies will become a major tool in promoting the voluntary transition to a healthier and sustainable future.

Funding Trends

...there are a number of disturbing trends in charitable funding which parallel the trends in governance.

Funding Priorities

Canadians are generally charitably minded. Statistics Canada reports that Canadians give over \$10 billion a year to charity.⁵⁴ About \$200 million, or three per cent goes toward environmental activities. About 40% of all donations go to religious causes, followed by social service at 11%.⁵⁵

That said, there are a number of disturbing trends in charitable funding which parallel the trends in governance. In 2003, the Canadian Council on Social Development released a damning study on the trends in funding for the charitable sector. Called *Funding Matters*,⁵⁶ the study found that on the funding side:

- Funders are adopting an increasingly targeted approach to funding.
- There has been a marked shift away from a core funding model, which funds organizations to pursue their mission. The new model is project-based and is characterized by contracts that give funders increased control over what the organization does and how it does it.
- Funders are reluctant to fund administrative costs that cannot be directly tied to a project or program.
- Funding is being provided for shorter periods of time, and is increasingly unpredictable.
- Reporting requirements have increased.
- Funders are increasingly requiring organizations to make joint submissions with other project partners and to demonstrate that they have secured funding from other sources – either financial or in-kind contributions – before extending their support.

The changes in funding practices have led to some worrisome trends:

- Volatility in revenue streams
- A tendency to 'mission drift'
- Loss of organizational infrastructure
- Reporting overload
- House of cards – organizational collapse
- Advocacy chill – fear of speaking out
- Human resource fatigue

Without a doubt, the situation has worsened significantly since 2003, largely due to the decline in government support noted in the previous section, and the increased pressure on both foundations and charities for increased financial accountability and results-based reporting. At a time when our country most needs a strong voluntary sector, the groups I have spoken with (both small and large) paint a clear trend

towards increased administration, accountability and reporting for ever-smaller grants.


There are other trends at play which also have significant impacts on funding for charities and environmental and sustainability movements:

1. **Strategic planning:** many foundations are adopting a strategic and focused approach to funding in an attempt to maximize the impact of their funds. Collaborative approaches are promoted and foundations are playing a more active role in shaping the initiatives they fund.
2. **Integration:** funders are emphasizing projects that are able to integrate environmental, economic and social objectives.
3. **Social ventures:** increasingly organizations are being required to incorporate a revenue stream into their projects and organization business plans.
4. **Crowd funding:** the next generation of donors is doing it online. Mobile donations and crowd funding are the latest trends in fundraising, and they are extremely effective for funding small projects (\$5k to \$50k).⁵⁷
5. **Popularity funding:** a fairly recent trend, building on the popularity of social media, is to link funding with 'likes'. To be successful, groups are required to canvass their members and the public to support their proposal by clicking on the website 'like' button, often having to carry out the task daily while the campaign is running.

With the exception of the last point, these trends are by and large positive efforts to improve the effectiveness of existing funding or to develop new funding streams.

The rise of corporate online funding contests is a particularly disturbing trend in that it wastes valuable time and membership capital of an NGO to participate in an exercise designed more to promote the funder than to determine the merit of a project. Groups are often required to have their members and supporters vote several times to support their project, which results in a tremendous drain on staff and volunteer resources with no guarantee of success. The charities spend their public goodwill without any guarantee of financial benefit, whereas the companies receive the benefit regardless of the outcome.

The general view among fundraisers is to not participate unless you have a serious chance of winning or can use the competition to engage and build your constituency.⁵⁸



...these [new] trends are by and large positive efforts to improve the effectiveness of existing funding or to develop new funding streams.

Angel Funding

Angel funding – investing in start-up business ventures – is on the rise. There is now a national organization, the [National Angel Capital Organization](#) (NACO), which champions the acceleration of angel funding and supports the availability of risk capital for high-potential, early-stage companies.

According to a recent report from NACO, Angel groups invested \$89 million in 2013, a 120% growth from the \$40.5 million invested in 2012. Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and Life Sciences sectors attracted a larger number of investments. Cleantech start-ups ranked a distant third, although it did attract the largest median investment (\$573,000).⁵⁹

Overall, the trend towards angel funding is a positive move in the transition to a new economy.

Taking on the Trends

Mutually Reinforced Destruction

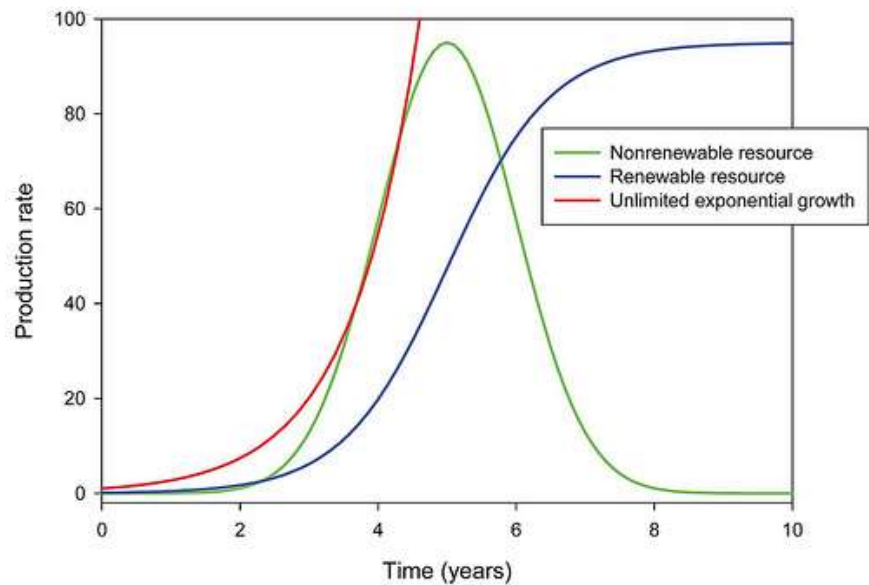
We are presented with a series of downward trends: environmental, economic, social, and political. These trends are interconnected and mutually reinforcing:

- A changing environment and more extreme weather are resulting in a significant rise in the costs of infrastructure repair, insurance, food, and energy.
- Peak oil and increased scarcity in fish stocks, arable land, and mineral resources lead to a significant rise in the cost of living.
- Rising costs lead to a cycle of economic decline and increased austerity, including lower profits, salaries, and disposable income, and a call for lower taxes and government spending.
- Our society is becoming more withdrawn and less engaged. When we are engaged, it is increasingly through simplistic messaging and anonymous online vitriol. We are losing faith in governments, institutions, and business to provide leadership.

That they are interconnected should be of no surprise to anyone. Economic wealth comes from resources and contributes to social affluence. Of greater concern is that these trends are mutually reinforcing, thereby rendering the economic decline and social upheaval all the more likely. Extreme weather drives up infrastructure and insurance costs; scarcity drives up the cost of living; economic uncertainty and a higher cost of living leads to budget cuts, reduced charitable giving, and pressure to reduce taxes; fear of the future leads to social pessimism; and the pressure to maintain economic growth and our current lifestyle reinforces the demand to develop more remote, expensive, and ecologically sensitive resources.

There is good reason for concern. Each of the significant trends follow what has been called the hockey stick curve – a centuries-long period of sustainable behaviour ending with rapid and exponential growth over the last century. Compare population growth, climate gases, energy consumption, and fisheries. The growth curve is remarkably similar, and in some cases (such as fisheries) we have already seen a rapid decline. For most of the major concerns we are at, or near, the peak of the curve and can only guess as to which path the curve will take. Our hopes for a levelling off in growth that are presented in population and climate models may be wishful thinking. Certainly, the projections for continued economic growth based on the consumption of non-renewable resources, even at a lower rate of growth, has little basis in reality.

Of greater concern is that these trends are mutually reinforcing, thereby rendering our demise all the more likely.



The three growth curves: everlasting, peak and crash, and sustained. They all look the same on the way up.

Source: The Oil Drum <http://www.theoil Drum.com/node/9323>

The Reluctance to Change

Sooner or later, by choice or by crisis, we will live in a conserving society. Only a fool would choose to act later and by crisis, but that is the direction we seem to be heading.

As a cyclist, I am always aware of my surroundings: the cars, pedestrians and the condition of the road ahead. I find most drivers to be equally alert and attentive. A surprisingly regular hazard is when a pedestrian crosses the street without looking. No doubt they took a quick glance and failed to notice the cyclist, but then they stride out across the street without a second precautionary look. It is as if they are thinking, "If I cannot see it, it doesn't exist." I have often wondered if this would also be their strategy if faced with an oncoming avalanche.

The fact is, we are facing a very real environmental avalanche – the perfect wave of extreme weather, resource depletion, and economic uncertainty – and our overall social response is to continue walking, our eyes straight ahead.

As environmentalists, our response has been a collective yell, "Look out!" As a society, we have ignored the warnings, or worse, waved a collective finger at the scientists, advisors, and activists who are raising

the alarm. The environmentalist response – yell louder – isn't working. We need to better understand the social dynamic in order to devise a better strategy.

The social response to all these negative trends is also negative. Bad news does not engender hope, it cultivates fear. And fear is not a strong motivating force for positive change. Fear leads to isolationism and protectionism. The problem is, we have been marketing change through fear, not hope. Bad news makes its own publicity; it's the good news that needs the help. We should be driven by concern for our future, but our message needs to resonate.

It really should come as no surprise that, in the face of overwhelming evidence, we won't act. Just consider what we are asking.


The environmental movement is a social movement at heart. Our issues and campaigns centre around the protection of nature, but what we are really aiming for is to change the nature of human interaction with nature. Stop logging old growth, stop poisoning bees, stop paving over farmland; at the core of every environmental campaign is human activity, whether in the collective sense of consumption and pollution, or in the individual acts of companies and governments. There is a never-ending succession of individual battles and campaigns, but the overall goal of the environmental movement is to change our attitudes and behaviour to nature. Like civil rights, gay rights, or feminism, we are a social movement and our ultimate goal is to change human behaviour.

So why have these other movements won social acceptance and we are still losing? While there are always issues and inequalities, it is fair to say that, in Canada at least, the other causes of civil rights and equality have become accepted as part of our cultural values. This, too, is what we aspire for with the environmental movement. There is one major difference, however. With civil rights, gay rights, and feminism, individuals are asked to accept the rights of others as equals. With environmentalism, individuals are asked to change themselves, a far more challenging task. Accepting the rights of others may require some degree of affirmative action to correct inherent prejudices and injustices, but reducing our environmental footprint requires that we change the very nature of how we live our lives and earn a living.

A couple of years back, I was helping co-ordinate a local workshop for a nationwide video conference of de-growth. One of our participants was the University of Toronto's Dr. Beth Savan, who encapsulated the problem of the environmental movement's approach to behavioural change. She said, "We used to think that if we gave people enough information we could change their beliefs and then their actions. What we have found is that it is actually the other way around. If we can get people to try new activities and they like them, their beliefs will change to accommodate their new attitudes and then they will become receptive to supporting information."⁶⁰

It really should come as no surprise that, in the face of overwhelming evidence, we won't act. Just consider what we are asking.

Accepting the rights of others may require some degree of affirmative action to correct inherent prejudices and injustices, but reducing our environmental footprint requires that we change the very nature of how we live our lives and earn a living.



Restoring a national vision is an issue of vital importance that should transcend and transform party politics.

Vision Loss

As a nation, we are blind.

It would be all too easy to blame business, media, or politicians for the loss of our national vision, but the truth is that we, the social leaders of the country, have allowed it to happen. We have all been so busy fighting our battles that we have lost sight of the war.

In the absence of a strong national vision, we have been led to believe that the health of our country is defined by the health of the economy. Quality of life has become a secondary message to jobs, tax cutting, and the health of the economy. Good jobs, a responsible tax system, and a resilient economy are all important issues, but they are means to an end, not the ultimate goal itself. In allowing environmental and social priorities to become fractured and focused, we have lost a strong vision for Canada as a nation, as a great place to live, and as a leader in promoting peace and environmental protection around the world. We have forgotten that what binds this country together is our pride in Canada.

Restoring a national vision is an issue of vital importance that should transcend and transform party politics. It does not mean repudiating the free-market message of the right and replacing it with a socialist vision of the left. Nor does it mean a new campaign to beat the climate deniers and resource exploiters into the ground. What it does mean is that we need to look closely at the major economic, environmental and social trends in order to develop common priorities that can be interpreted and addressed by all political parties, by governments, by businesses, by organizations, and by individuals across the country.

Fortunately, for every negative trend we can find positive counter trends. We are gradually weaning ourselves from fossil fuels, we are creating a new local and green economy, we are learning to live within our personal and national means, and we are regaining a sense of pride in our communities. The positive trends are small by comparison to their negative counterparts, but they are the seeds of hope.

To address these trends, and to restore public faith in our collective ability to create a better future, we need simple integrated solutions to complex issues; ones that will be catalysts for positive change. Not just band-aid patches on an economy that is past its best before date, but solutions that improve our lives today while building the foundation for a better future.

We need solutions that will help us live better with less.

Solutions

The Next Wave

Ideas for the Future



The Next Wave

On one level, there is nothing wrong with the old wave. When it works, it works spectacularly, winning not just the battle but causing a ripple effect throughout the system.

What's Wrong With the Old Wave?

On April 8th, 2014, Ontario puffed its last piece of coal. The Thunder Bay Generating Station was the last of the province's five coal-fired generating stations to close and Ontario followed through on a decade-old promise to eliminate coal as a source of electrical power.

Jack Gibbons is widely recognized as the driving force behind the coal phase out. An economist by training, Jack has served as the Chairman for the Ontario Clean Air Alliance since 1977. The Alliance has over 90 members, including health and environmental organizations, faith communities, unions, utilities, municipalities, and corporations. The membership is largely there to support and empower Jack (and more recently Angela Bischoff) as the voice of clean power in Ontario. Jack's intelligent and tenacious approach built upon a strong public outcry over the health effects of smog and air pollution. For a government looking to make a visible commitment to the Ontario electorate, the decision to phase out coal power was a simple, high-profile act, but it was also one that carried immense impact with respect to air quality and the support for green power and electricity conservation in Ontario.

Jack Gibbons typifies the successfulness of the tried and true approach to environmental activism: a cause, a leader, and a political objective. There are other examples of successful campaigns through the years that have become the defining moments of Canada's environmental movement: the Coalition on Acid Rain, Clayoquot Sound and other national parks, the cosmetic pesticide ban, and anti-sprawl legislation. Many of Canada's leading environmentalists, Elizabeth May and Tzeporah Berman for example, gained experience and prominence working on campaigns which they have used as a foundation for working on long-term solutions. Many are still on the front lines, leading the next round of campaigns: the tar sands, pipelines, neonicotinoids and bees, and of course, climate change.

There are several lessons to be learned from the campaign focus, but primary among them are tenacity versus diversity, and battles versus the war.

The coal phase out was won largely because of the tenacity of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance and its focus on achieving success through legislative commitments. It is super effective when it works, and super kudos are due to the talented and driven people behind them.

On one level, there is nothing wrong with the old wave. When it works, it works spectacularly, winning not just the battle but causing a ripple effect throughout the system. Years after the acid rain battle was won (at least on paper), a number of us, including the Sierra Club's Dan McDermott, were invited to a meeting with INCO's Vice President of Environmental Health and Safety, Charlie Ferguson, to review the

company's performance in reducing acid emissions. In the early days, the INCO smelter was the largest single-source emitter in North America. As a Greenpeace campaigner, Dan brought a dead fish in a coffin to the 1985 INCO annual meeting. Nearly ten years later, and Charlie Ferguson is thanking Dan, the Coalition on Acid Rain, and the rest of us for our efforts in campaigning for legislation to curtail acid emissions. Part of the cost of the reductions INCO considered a cost of doing business, but they also found they were also able to sell their emissions control technology and recoup some of their costs.

Single battles do not win wars, and so the other aspect is the diversity of initiatives that support the overall goal. The coal phase-out was won because of the cultural concern over smog. Ontario's *Places to Grow Act* was implemented in response to public outcry over sprawl and the loss of prime farmland. The culture of change is every bit as important as the battles for individual legislation. If we can't win over the culture of consumption to a culture of conservation, for example, our individual gains will be lost in the long run. At the same time, our culture — how we live our lives and what we consider important — helps shape the political debate and agenda. If the focus is on taxes and personal wealth, we have lost the war. This is why it is vitally important to focus on our current cultural priorities and create a new vision and priorities.

This is important to keep in mind as we tackle the biggest environmental/economic/social issue of all time — climate change. We have thus far, in spite of the most tenacious bunch of activists and scientists, been unable to make significant legislative advances on the issue. Quite simply, we don't have the cultural base behind us. Which is why we need more people-friendly solutions that also happen to be climate-friendly.

We should not give up on the campaign model. It is extremely effective. However, if we recognize that the campaign model is dependent on fertile cultural ground, then we also need to devote energy to ensuring a strong Canadian culture based on environmental values and global responsibility.

Our past environmental successes came at a time of relative wealth when, as a culture, we could afford the luxury of environmental values. The gains we made were through a collective social sense of guilt over the damage we had caused. We are not so wealthy now and the economic prospects are bleak, especially when you factor in peak oil, resource scarcity, and the economic cost of extreme weather. Perhaps, too, the next generation sees its role and responsibility in a different light. Whatever the reason, the consensus is that the environmental movement needs new approaches.

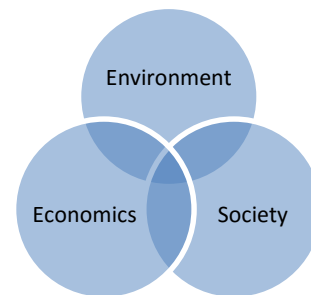
Our model of sustainability should be a pyramid, where the environment is the foundation for both a strong economy and a healthy society.

Rethinking Sustainability

Born out of environmentalism, the sustainable development movement sought to find solutions to balancing environmental, economic and social goals.

Like environmentalism, it has undergone an evolution in approach. Professors Anne Dale and Pamela Robinson refer to it as three generations of sustainability: the first, from 1985 to 1995 was a period of intense debate and government-led initiatives to define sustainable development; the second, from 1995 to 2005, was a period of targeted initiatives aimed at operationalizing sustainable development through low-hanging fruit; and the third, now emerging, is a deeper awareness of the systemic nature of change, in particular in community design.⁶¹

At the outset, sustainable development was an effort to balance competing goals. The prevailing model was a Venn diagram, or a three-legged stool, where each needed to be in balance for the system to work.



The model, though useful, gave the impression that sustainability was a series of negotiated trade-offs which led to the belief that nature was willing to deal. Environmental delegates might have been willing to broker deals in order to shift development onto a more sustainable path, but the physical limits of ecological loading and natural resources remain non-negotiable.

The way we approach sustainability needs to adapt to recognize that environmental health (including resources) is paramount if we are to have a healthy economy and a healthy society. It is not a question of 'balancing' three equal sectors, it is the recognition that social well-being depends on economic productivity which in turn depends on ecosystem health and natural resources. Our model of sustainability should be a pyramid, where the environment is the foundation for both a strong economy and a healthy society.



The pyramid model also reflects aboriginal, religious, and cultural values that recognize that the natural environment is the very foundation of all we cherish, and of life itself. It is both our moral obligation, and in our own vested interest, to ensure that the environment is able to provide for our needs for generations to come.

We draw resources from the physical environment to power our economy and meet social goals, returning our waste back to the environment.

What happens if the demands of society are too heavy, or the economic exploitation too great? Clearly, the system will become unstable and collapse. The balance we seek is to ensure our economic and social demands don't exceed our carrying capacity (top right).

Also with this representation, the value of a social economy and value-added production becomes more apparent – creating a stronger interaction between society and the economy to minimize the pressure on resource extraction to generate wealth and value (lower right).

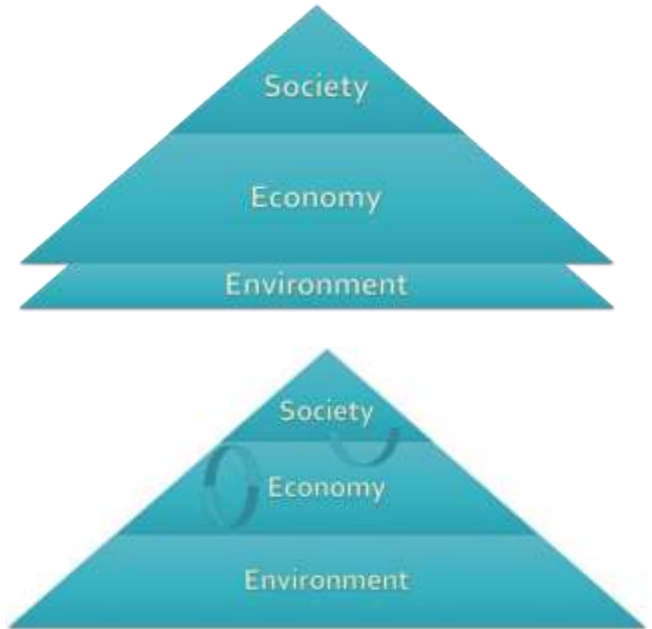
If there is a third generation of sustainability, Dale *et al* argue, it will be marked by a deeper, systemic approach to sustainability where we recognize that health of our society, the economy, and the environment are inextricably linked, and so too, therefore, must the solutions be integrated.

In practical terms, this means a shift in government policy and programs (municipal, provincial and federal) away from micro measurement of grams of CO₂ or kilowatts saved or generated, to an emphasis on macro measurement and a willingness to invest in sustainability as part of our Canadian culture. Safe cycling and public transit, urban village design, energy conservation and renewable energy, community gardens and local food – they are all part of an integrated approach to sustainability that benefits society, the economy, and the environment all at the same time. The shift required is to focus on quality of life solutions at the local level that translate into measurable improvements in the indicators of resource efficiency and sustainability at the provincial and national level.

These are obvious solutions, but in reality they run counter to the current silo approach in government that does not think in terms of co-benefits. What is encouraging is that both the sustainable development movement and the environmental movement is coming to the same conclusion: we need integrated solutions that will improve people's lives at the same time as they protect the environment.

The Call to Reboot the Environmental Movement

In 2004, Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus touched off a minor firestorm in the environmental movement with their provocatively titled paper, *The Death of Environmentalism*.⁶² What they said – that environmentalism needs a reboot – has since been echoed by many others. A recent Grist interview with David Fenton of Fenton Communications (an environmental marketing firm) has been making



the rounds on Facebook because he recommends environmentalists stop using words like planet and Earth.⁶³ Fenton is quoted as saying:

“People working in the non-profit world sometimes have trouble adopting a marketing mindset, but in the end, the goal is for people to ‘buy’ our ideas — ideas for a better world.”

This call for new approaches has been picked up within the Canadian environmental movement as well. There is an excellent series of [issue briefs](#) on the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers’ Network website that provide insights into how to reshape and strengthen the Canadian environmental movement. Here are some of the highlights.

Anne Dale (now the principal investigator for [Community Research Connections](#)), looked at the twin challenges of social media and social change in her paper, *Bridging Gaps: Building Diversity, Resilience and Connectivity*.⁶⁴ She recommended that environmental groups shift from being “lone wolf activists” to embrace social media, social networks, and social mobs. Additionally, she suggests that funders combine resources to support a national climate change campaign equivalent in size and co-ordination to the anti-smoking campaign. Both approaches support the development of a strong social consensus as the precursor to action.

Andrew Heintzman of [Investeco Capital Corp](#), brings a business perspective to the challenge with his paper, *New Strategies to Confront Climate Change*.⁶⁵ He points to the growing support for action in the business community as it begins to grapple with incalculable but potentially enormous future financial risks of climate change. He recommends the environmental movement and funders form new alliances (both alliances of environmental groups as well as broader alliances between environmental groups, business, and other interests); deal with oil sands emissions; embrace market solutions; and for foundations to invest in new technology funds.

Mark Sarner of [Manifest Communications](#) argues that environmental foundations should adopt a new approach to funding “built on a better understanding of the nature of social change and of how to impact public and corporate policy.”⁶⁶ He argues that grant makers need to see themselves as agents of change in their own right rather than simply as funders of the services of grantees. He suggests increasing the funding for advocacy and policy from 6% to 25% (from \$7.4 million annually to \$33 million based on 2004 data). According to Mark:

That means a new approach to advocacy. It means developing a clear, concrete agenda for policy change, a logic of address that can generate significant buy in across the sector. It means developing an advocacy action plan that integrates public engagement, stakeholder engagement and government relations into one coherent, dynamic program. It means rallying the sector into a chorus of common concern, commitment and

purpose, a strategy that builds critical mass and momentum, reaches out to and engages new constituencies in new ways and demonstrates political clout and savvy to the powers that be. It means doing all this with a sense of urgency commensurate with the situation, being committed to action above all else and progress as an imperative not a pipe dream. Only once the sector gets its act together can it hope to get the society to do the same on environment issues.

In one of the last in the CEGN series, *The Age of the Unenvironmental*, Ian Gill (the founder of Ecotrust Canada) builds on the recommendations of the previous papers with a call to action. He writes, “if a national revolution is outside the collective emotional range of Canadians, perhaps more evolution is what is needed.”⁶⁷ He goes on, “So what is Canada’s project for the 21st century? Perhaps it is to become a global leader in what, after all, comes more naturally to Canadians than to a lot of other people in the world – fostering co-operation, integration and collaboration.”


So, is there a call to reshape the environmental movement in Canada (and perhaps worldwide)? Most definitely! It is not a repudiation of past approaches, more a recognition that now we have everyone’s attention we need to shift gears in order to gain traction. Shifting gears is not a bad analogy – first gear gets you moving, but to keep building momentum you need to shift into second, or third, gear.

The key elements that have been identified in the new approach are:

- **Vision:** having a clear and positive sense of what we want to achieve
- **Collaboration:** building strong partnerships across sectors and working together towards common goals
- **Integration:** developing a complete strategy to achieve our goals combining different tools and approaches
- **Marketing:** promoting solutions that make sense to people, address their concerns, and/or improve their lives.

These are all fine words, and anyone who has been part of a strategic planning meeting will be well acquainted with them. But this is where you need to pause and reflect on what they mean at a national level – not just to your organization, but to the country as a whole. There is an evolutionary component, as Ian Gill puts it, where individual groups, businesses, funders and governments adjust their own approach, but there is also the need for as all to step up and participate in a new national approach. We need to think revolution, even if we are only able to implement via evolution.

We are not alone in this effort. Far from it. If we layer this approach over the analysis of the environmental, economic, and social trends, it becomes evident that the environmental movement is not as isolated as we might think. We know these trends are interconnected, and that



So, is there a call to reshape the environmental movement in Canada (and perhaps worldwide)? Most definitely!

they fuel an overall response of retrenchment and protectionism. We need to address the root causes and provide solutions that have support across society and that replace fear with hope.

Nor is Canada as isolated as we might think. The entire world is grappling with the challenges of climate change, resource depletion, economic uncertainty, and social stress. No United Nations conference can solve these challenges, in fact after the 2009 Copenhagen conference, the general consensus was that 20 years of work had failed to produce any significant action.⁶⁸ Neither is any government capable of solving our problems for us, not so long as they are thrown out of office for showing vision and leadership. Around the world, people are grappling with the same sense of powerlessness against the trends of environmental, economic, and even social decline.

Canada has a unique opportunity to be a world leader in the transition to a sustainable future. We have the resources, we are comparatively well-off and buffered from environmental and economic crises, and we have tremendous talent and entrepreneurial spirit. But we are also becoming more insular, reactive, and mean-spirited, none of which bodes well for the future. It all depends on our ability to develop a national vision, to unite behind it, and to empower each other to be leaders in achieving it.

We need a national strategy, but not one that depends on any single organization or leader. We need a new approach that resonates, not dictates. Individually, we should all be able to see how and where we fit in this approach: both how it empowers us in our work and how we can support it through our actions. It should build on existing strengths and identify ways to enhance positive change.

This cannot be an ordinary strategy. It is not simply a matter of bringing the usual suspects together and expanding our alliance. It needs to be a new approach that gets at the heart of the matter.

This is integration at the highest level: a Canadian vision. Environmental, economic, social, cultural and faith values should all be reflected in an integrated approach. It is an organic approach: initiatives, collaborations, and campaigns will come and go depending on the priorities of the day, but through them we will also be able to focus on building support, funding, and infrastructure for ourselves and for future generations.

A new national strategy is needed, but is it feasible? Certainly, the chances of creating a united national movement is slim. Not impossible – Idle No More was a grassroots campaign that sparked national interest and cross-sectoral support. But still, the chances are slim. What we need is a pragmatic approach that breaks down an overall strategy into individual elements.

Elements of a New National Strategy

1. Start from core values and issues: start with strong common values that can be applied to the top issues.
 2. Move from fear to hope: fear of environmental or economic collapse is driving the urgency for action, but our message should be one of hope.
 3. Embrace complexity and promote simplicity: Our solutions must be elegant, yet they must also reflect a strong understanding of the complexity of the issues and underlying concerns.
 4. Promote positive solutions – live better with less.
 5. Empower innovation and leadership: not just a few leaders, but a distributed leadership approach where we all have the capacity to be leaders in our work and our lives.
 6. Nudge change via key projects, campaigns, policy and incentives.
 7. Invest in the foundation of a sustainable future.
 8. Prepare for the emergency transition to a conserver society and economy.
-

A Radically Pragmatic Approach

The most difficult aspect of proposing a new approach is to find the right balance. The recommendations must be significant enough to have impact and simple enough to be doable. They must challenge the status quo, but also be based on existing initiatives. They must require bold leadership, yet be easily integrated into existing structures. In short, they need to be simple measures that will have a significant ripple effect.



Follow the Frog

Just how far are we prepared to go? The message in [this ad](#) is that even though our cause is urgent, our solutions need to be practical.

If it is to work, a new approach needs to combine several elements: organic action, catalytic projects, and orchestrated campaigns. The new approach needs to start with an understanding of the trends and their implications for social behaviour. It needs to build on positive organic trends through strategic interventions: either through individual catalytic projects and initiatives or through larger collaborative campaigns.

The key **organic trend** is our ability to adapt to adversity. In the face of increased extreme weather, rising costs and economic uncertainty we will shift our behaviours and spending as required. The initial response may be one of austerity – cutting costs – but we will continue to seek a high quality of life, and adjust our behaviours and values accordingly. The conservator economy and society are inevitable; our challenge is to use them as opportunities to promote a new economy and an improved quality of life.

The **catalytic projects** are ones that support and accelerate the voluntary transition to a more sustainable economy and society. They focus on opportunities to improve our lives while reducing our environmental impact. Live better with less. They can be done by anyone. Any group, business, entrepreneur, funder or government can pick up on the suggestions in this report and integrate them into their own work. Adapt and adopt.

The **collaborative campaigns** will require more planning and high-level co-ordination. These are the key investments in our social and economic infrastructure that will support organic change. The focus is on improving our lives, but they all contribute to reshaping our economy and society to be more efficient and resilient in the face of an uncertain future.

Pull these elements together, and we have a national transition strategy to a sustainable future.

The Top Seven Solutions

If we want to build a new wave of commitment to sustainability in Canada we have to think big. While the movement will always be shaped by personal choice and individual innovation, we will need strong signature campaigns to kick start the process and to empower the organic evolution of ideas and solutions.

These are simple ideas, until you begin to unpack them; to realize that we are not doing these things as well as we could be, and that to implement them fully will require an immense degree of commitment and collaboration between funders, organizations, governments, and companies as well as a strong groundswell of public and entrepreneurial support. They mark a major shift in how we approach sustainability.

They are doable. Each recommendation already has on-the-ground champions. What is required is to look at how we can expand the existing initiatives into national campaigns.

1. Reclaim Canada: Develop a National Vision

We have allowed our national priorities to be defined by money, not people. Absent a strong national dialogue about what makes Canada a great place to live, we have allowed economic growth, job creation, tax reduction, and government cutbacks to be the primary indicators of our collective progress and well-being. Money is the means to an end, not an end in and of itself.

We all have a particular focus in our work – areas of specialization. We would all benefit from a strong national vision based on quality of life as opposed to quantity of money. From a strong national vision would flow stronger support for actions that enhance our ability to achieve our vision. Fiscal responsibility and job creation would still be key priorities, but within the context of investing in a sustainable future and a high quality of life for all Canadians.

A national vision will also help to build alliances across all sectors, including environmental, economic, cultural, faith, First nations, health and society. It is the logical starting point for building a common agenda that is based on well-being, genuine progress, and sustainability.

Degree of Difficulty: *either easy or difficult*

On one level, this is a simple recommendation to implement. All we need do is to focus on restoring pride in Canada as a great place to live and as a world leader in helping others. The more intensive approach would involve convening a national forum and consultation on a new vision for Canada. A lot more work, but it would help to generate momentum and build new alliances for a common future.

Absent a strong national dialogue about what makes Canada a great place to live, we have allowed economic growth, job creation, tax reduction, and government cutbacks to be the primary indicators of our collective progress and well-being.

2. Challenge Ourselves: Market Solutions

There are a number of fairly obvious solutions that reflect the convergence of environmental, economic, and social values. There are many groups and businesses that are the vanguard of these solutions. They need support. We need to up the ante, to turn these solutions into national campaigns with regional and local applications.

If we look at “living better with less” as a guiding principle, there are a number of solutions that improve our lives at the same time as reducing our environmental footprint. These are the tangible solutions: urban villages, better transit, safe cycling, energy conservation and green power, local food, and local economies. Done right, they will save people money, create local jobs, and be an investment in resilient economies.

These campaigns will be the human face to the movement. We focus on solutions people want; solutions that will improve our lives. In so doing, we will create the demand for government policy and the products and services that will make it even easier to live better with less.

Degree of Difficulty: *moderate*

Campaigns amplify existing initiatives and tap into existing networks. They provide resources and support to local groups and municipalities to assist with their outreach and engagement programs. Each campaign can be independently developed and managed, although they could also be mutually supportive of the overall vision. The difficulty lies in pooling resources or identifying new funding, and in determining the leadership and coordination to manage the campaign (see recommendations 3 and 4).

3. Raise New Funds: Finance the Future

To talk about raising new funds in a time of austerity is really to propose shifting priorities. What we need is to improve the focus and flow of funds towards implementing key solutions and campaigns.

There are two types of investments required: long-term and immediate (or capital and operating, if you prefer). Investing in sustainable infrastructure (such as public transit, parks, and good urban design) are priorities for long-term investments. The immediate and ongoing priorities are to stimulate the voluntary and organic transition to a more sustainable future through incentives and disincentives, support programs, and financing for innovation and economic development.

Beyond shifting priorities in existing budgets, there should also be a concerted effort to raise new funds for a better Canada. Clear priorities and campaigns will lead to new opportunities to challenge Canadians to invest in our own future.

Degree of Difficulty: *moderate to hard*

Strategic planning in governments and funders is a long-term process. To raise new funds, or to shift the culture of government, even harder. There is immediate potential, however, for foundations and corporations to integrate a national vision and priorities into their strategic directions and to champion individual solutions.

4. Collaborate: Organize for Change

Consistent with a strong national vision and priority solutions, we need to organize ourselves better, not just to lobby for change but to help implement change. This marks a significant shift in the traditional focus of advisory bodies (environmental advisory councils, round tables, and environmental networks), but it will build an even stronger base of support for policy initiatives that will help people live better with a smaller ecological footprint.

Two types of collaborations, based on current examples, are seen as having the most impact. The first is solutions-oriented networks and coalitions, such as those on green energy and local food. The second is the place-based CivicAction model, a collaboration between business, social, and government leaders to support a strong regional vision. In addition, there are process-based approaches that can help groups collaborate to develop new solutions; in particular collective impact and transformative scenario planning.

Degree of Difficulty: *easy to moderate*

These types of collaborations already exist, and they work well. Existing networks and councils (such as municipal environmental advisory committees) can be adapted to incorporate an empowerment mandate along with the traditional networking and policy focus. The easy approach is to wait for these networks to emerge organically. The more proactive approach will be for funders to provide stimulus funding and core administrative funding for existing and new collaborations.

5. Lead: Build Leadership Across Canada

We need a nation of leaders. First, we need champions for Canada, be they from the social, corporate, or political sector. We need our governments to emphasize a strong vision for our future, based on the quality of life and genuine progress and not just economic growth. We need high-level strategies and action plans that identify the priorities for action and follow through with legislation, policy, fiscal instruments, support programs and public engagement.

We also need innovation and leadership at all levels across the country, from community leaders to business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Degree of Difficulty: *moderate to hard*

Leadership is all around us, but as a nation we are hard on our leaders. Leadership is as much a battle of opposing political, economic, or ideological forces than a common commitment to our country. The challenge lies in finding common cause between traditionally adversarial views.

6. Empower Others: A Focus on Voluntary Transitions

The true mark of leadership lies not in wielding power, but in empowering others. If we recognize that our strength lies not in forcing change, but in enabling change, it will give rise to a new range of priorities for where we invest funds. In particular, we need to invest in incubation centres and programs to support social ventures and green economic development, all with an eye to creating a more efficient and resilient economy. In turn, the primary focus for all these new initiatives becomes to help people live better while using less.

Degree of Difficulty: *moderate*

There is a series of relatively easy initiatives that can be undertaken at a local, through to the national, level that can support innovation. Look for catalytic projects – ones that will have a significant ripple effect in empowering change.

7. Review: Consultation and Continuous Improvement

We need an open and honest review process. Statistics on environmental and resource trends need to be published regularly in order that we can assess what progress has been made, and where we need to improve. Statistics and reporting should focus on macro trends – are we consuming more energy, is our food produced locally and sustainably – more than on measuring the impact of individual programs and projects.

Similarly, public consultation should focus on the big picture. Are we providing a sustainable future for our children? If not, how can we change to path we are on?

Degree of Difficulty: *moderate*

Information has become more tightly controlled in recent years, an indication of the shifting culture in government. An emphasis on accountability to a national vision and priorities can help reverse this trend. For example, the federal government used to publish a detailed compendium of environmental and resource statistics in [Human Activity and the Environment](#).

Discussion

Now let's dig a little deeper. There are examples, case studies, and existing initiatives that show these recommendations are not only feasible but that they are already underway.

In the opening section of this paper, I said that there will be two types of leaders in this next wave: the innovators and the catalysts (p. 8). In this section, I highlight examples of innovation that relate to the seven major recommendations. The task is to find ways to build upon them as a co-ordinated approach to tackling the challenges that lie ahead.

1. Reclaim Canada: Develop a National Vision

- Develop our national vision of Canada as a great place to live and as a leader in creating a better world
- Incorporate this vision into the 2017 Sesquicentennial celebrations
- Incorporate environmental values into our national vision: live better with less
- Adapt and adopt a common logo
- Focus on genuine progress

Our first task is to reclaim Canada. Without a strong national vision, Canada has become little more than a country of taxpayers. It's no wonder we are all struggling to gain traction on individual issues. If we want to build stronger alliances in support of a sustainable future, we need to start with common values and a common vision.

It may seem an impossible task to find a common vision for Canada, but then again it may not be so hard at all. My sense is that there are two core values that we all share.

First, we all want Canada to be a great place to live. We want to be proud of Canada as a great country, and we want our own home, neighbourhood, and town or city to be a great place to live. How we define "a great place to live" is as individual as all of us, but the common bond is a belief in a high quality of life.

Second, we want to be proud of our country on the international stage. Canada was once a world leader in peacekeeping, civil rights, and environmental responsibility. We could wear the Canadian flag with pride on our backpacks, confident that people the world over would welcome us as representatives of a compassionate country.

These two points are a good starting point for a dialogue on a national vision, and how we would each interpret it in our work and on our issues.



Here's a practical starting point. Canada's sesquicentennial is in 2017, and there is a national initiative underway to engage Canadians. It is called [ImagiNation 150](#), is based in Calgary and His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, serves as its honorary patron. The group has a list of other [sesqui events](#) that is worth checking out.

The sesquicentennial is the perfect focal point for a national dialogue, but we need to take it further. We need to operationalize the vision. To do this, organizations across Canada need to integrate the sense of pride in Canada as a great place to live into their work. What does "my Canada", and "my community" mean to you? These are questions that our faith, cultural, First Nations, and community groups are already grappling with, and they are questions that the environmental and sustainable development community should ask as well. If we want to develop an integrated approach to solving the major challenges of this century, then we need to start with common ground. Chances are, we will find common solutions.

This first recommendation, therefore, is for every Canadian organization to consider how they can help rebuild our common commitment and pride in Canada:

1. Get involved in the sesquicentennial dialogue. [Download the logo](#) from the i150 website and start your own sesquicentennial dialogue or event.
2. Build alliances across sectors in dialogue around a national vision and a common agenda: "Our Canada."
3. Develop public messaging to build affinity and support for solutions that will help build a stronger Canada.

The next level would be to develop a more formal national vision for Canada. This would require leadership to bring together some of Canada's social leaders from various backgrounds to craft a social vision for Canada in 2050. There are probably only a handful of individuals or organizations that could spearhead such an initiative, so I will leave it for you to figure out who you are. I will only say this: Canada needs a strong vision and leadership, and it has to come from society, not government. It is only through the strongest and broadest social consensus that we can begin to focus the nation's priorities and resources on the imperative of a sustainable future and a high quality of life for all Canadians.

I believe the leadership for such an initiative can be found from the business sector, major foundations, and senior non-governmental organizations. For ideas on structure, see the section on collaboration below.

Incorporate environmental values into our national vision: live better with less

Canadians want to live a good life. It's as simple as that. Even though protecting nature is a strong Canadian value, we value our lifestyle more. We know this current lifestyle is just not sustainable. We need to focus on solutions that will help people live better with less.

“Live better with less” needs to be a key part of our national vision: an expression of our commitment to live in harmony with nature and a challenge to improve our quality of life in Canada while reducing our consumption of energy and natural resources. For society to shift onto a sustainable path, we need to make a conserving lifestyle easy, affordable, and (above all) desirable. If people do not see personal value in using less, they will soon revert back to old habits. By contrast, conserving actions that are personally rewarding will be repeated, expanded to include other actions, and copied by others.

Voluntary change is a cycle of positive reinforcement. It is driven by individual behaviour and choice and reinforced by business and government leadership.

Individual action leads to new business opportunities. In turn, new products and services make it even easier for people to adopt conserving actions. Individual action also creates demand for government policies and investments. In the end, the government response to environmental and economic priorities will be based on a strong public desire for positive solutions that save us money and improve our lives.

This change is already happening – witness the rise of fuel-efficient cars, commuter cycling, solar power, energy conservation, local and organic food, community agriculture, and the new businesses emerging to meet the challenge. In the end, our role is to be a catalyst for the positive change that is already occurring all around us.



Adapt and adopt a common logo

As noted at the outset of this report, we have far too many names for what is essentially the same thing: “living better with less.” If only there was a simple way to bring the many terms together.



This is probably the best known environmental icon. Search Google Images for ‘recycling’, and you get many variations on the Mobius loop. But if you do a search for ‘sustainability’, ‘sustainable development’, ‘green’, ‘eco-friendly’, ‘conservation’ or any other of the family of terms used to describe the environmental movement, you will get a complete mix of graphics, pictures, and logos. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then perhaps a single icon can transcend and connect the many terms for sustainability.

To represent “living better with less” a single arrow will suffice. The icon at right⁶⁹ represents the common goal of environmental sustainability – meeting our needs and aspirations while minimizing our environmental impact.



- The left side of the arrow represents “using less” – it goes down and gets smaller.
- The right side represents “living better” – our quality of life increases when we choose conserve solutions that reflect our values and our individual priorities.
- Together, “use less, live better” reflects our belief that positive, voluntary change is at the heart of a voluntary transition to a sustainable future.

As a visual image, the arrow can also be used to represent living green, a smaller ecological footprint, sustainable development, conservation, or any other term that embraces the concept of living lightly on this planet. As with the 3Rs symbol, we fully expect that the icon will be adapted to many different applications. Creativity is good. Our initial task is to get the symbol to be universally recognized, and then it can be integrated as a common visual link within a diverse and complex movement.

You can download the artwork for the logo at www.canadaconserves.ca. Like the sesquicentennial logo, it is free to use to promote a commitment to living better with less. For example, our logo for Canada Conserves integrates the green arrow with a Canadian maple leaf:



Focus on genuine progress

We need to change our definition of wealth.

If I am right, the collapse of the conventional economic model and the rise of an austerity economy will lead to a natural shift in social values away from materialism. The real challenge is to get us there voluntarily, and ahead of an economic crisis. To do that, we need both social marketing and solid research. We need to want it, and to understand what it means and how to get there.

Most countries and governments use GDP and job creation as indicators of national progress. Granted, economic health is essential for the health of the nation. It puts money in our pockets and taxes in government coffers, all of which is essential for our ability to invest in the things we value. But to consider economic health as the end goal is erroneous. As we have seen, what is good for the economy isn't always good for the environment, and with a decline in environmental quality comes a decline in our quality of life. In the short term, and on an individual basis, we can easily see gains in our quality of life based on material possessions and the experiences we can afford, but over time, and on a social scale, our quality of life declines. Economic progress does not equate with social progress.

A new definition of wealth would be based on well-being, not just the bank account. Now, before you dismiss this as an unworkable concept, consider that [Vancity](#), a major co-operative credit union in British Columbia with assets of \$17.5 billion and over 500,000 members, has adopted a vision statement of "redefine wealth." In full, their vision statement reads, "At Vancity, our vision is to redefine wealth in a way that furthers the financial, social and environmental well-being of our members and their communities."

Fortunately, there has been a concerted effort over the past few decades to develop a truly integrated approach to measuring social progress. Unfortunately, it has resulted in a number of competing approaches to measuring overall progress. Here are seven of them, covering local, national, and international initiatives:

- Vital Signs <http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca/en/home>
- The Canadian Index of Wellbeing <https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/>
- The Social Progress Index <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/data/spi>
- Happy Planet Index <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>
- World Happiness Report <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/world-happiness-report-2013/>
- OECD Better Life Index <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/canada/>
- The Good Country Index <http://www.goodcountry.org/>



Pharrell Williams:
24hoursofhappy.com/

Genuine progress may be complex, but it all boils down to the ability for us all to be happy.

Vital Signs was started by the Toronto Community Foundation in 2001 to measure progress in the Toronto region. It has been adopted by the Community Foundations of Canada, and there are now Vital Signs reports for 30 communities, each one prepared by a local community foundation. The benefit is that it ties local initiatives and data into a report that has direct relevance to people within the community. It's about our neighbourhoods.

At a national level, the Vital Signs project is able to look at individual components and strategies. The 2013 report focused on food and the role of community-based initiatives in shaping the food system in Canada.⁷⁰

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing, housed at the University of Waterloo, has been at the forefront of genuine progress research. In 1999, the Atkinson Charitable Foundation convened a group of index experts, including Statistics Canada, to develop a tool to measure wellbeing in Canada. The Foundation has been key to supporting the CIW over the past decade, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation has recently announced it will use the CIW as an evaluation tool and a baseline for establishing funding priorities.

There is a degree of collaboration between CIW and Vital Signs. In Kingston and Kitchener-Waterloo, residents participated in a Community Wellbeing Survey that asked them about the many aspects of their lives that contribute to and detract from their overall wellbeing. The survey is one of a number of collaborative activities taking place as part of CKX – Community Knowledge Exchange - a new approach to building and sharing community knowledge initiatives across the country.⁷¹ CKX will host an inaugural CKX summit in Toronto in early November 2014.

So, it appears that Canada is well advanced in measuring overall progress – an early adopter. But we are also a small player on the international scene, and the Canadian methodology risks being swamped by international efforts that start with a common global framework and work down to the country level.

The international efforts are visually impressive. The OECD website makes it easy to compare countries, and the Happy Planet Index integrates the Ecological Footprint model into its work, which is very smart. The problem is that the indicators need to be common to all countries, which can lead to oversimplification. The Social Progress Index, for example, uses three indicators of ecological sustainability (greenhouse gas emissions, water withdrawals, and biodiversity) and there is no measure of the transition to renewable power.⁷²

The latest entry at the international level is the Good Country Index, which features an attractive website that is easy to navigate and drill down into. Ireland ranks as the best country overall. Canada is 12th

overall, but we are number two in the environmental category, which is sure to raise some questions within the environmental community.

All these different models and websites present us with a problem: there's no point in promoting genuine progress indices as alternatives to GDP if there is no consistency and reliability in the data and conclusions.

The challenge is to develop an index that is statistically relevant, globally applicable, easily communicated and that can be readily translated into policy initiatives. This is no small task. For example, if you measure only a few key indicators, you run the risk of rewarding initiatives that are aimed at improving the indicators. The first Vital Signs project for Toronto in 2006 used five indicators of environmental health: smog alert days, waste diversion rates, beach closures, litter, and water consumption rates. The advantage was that these were issues of high relevance to Toronto residents, and that statistically relevant data was readily available. The disadvantage is that the local issues, and hence the data, cannot be compared with other communities.

By 2013, the Toronto Vital Signs project had grown to become a 300+ page report with a fantastically detailed environmental section that covered all aspects of urban design, food, transportation, and ten specific indicators of environmental health (including the original five indicators from 2006).

We currently have a confusing mix of report cards on genuine progress. We need a strong national index that is integrated both locally and internationally. A national GPI collaboration is needed to bring the lead players together with funders, government, and marketing leaders in order to design a common strategy. We need value in the indicators (the ability to connect to issues of importance), value in the research (the ability to access good sources of data), and strong marketing potential (the ability to translate the research into clear messaging).

How can we build on the existing initiatives? Here are some suggestions:

- A commitment from Canadian governments to use genuine progress as a foundation for assessing progress and setting priorities
- A national project to develop common approaches to reporting genuine progress
- Canadian leadership on the international stage to promote common approaches to genuine progress
- Social marketing campaigns to translate what genuine progress means in terms of our vision for Canada
- Integration of genuine progress assessment into funding programs as a means of promoting integrated approaches.



"Unsung Hero" (Official HD) : TVC Thai Life Insurance 2014 ; Tel...
A Thai life insurance company offers [this take](#) on the true meaning of life.

If we are successful, Canadians will place greater value on personal development over material consumption. We will cherish personal education, skills and hobbies. We will support arts, culture, and good food in our communities, and we will design our communities to be vibrant urban villages with great amenities and green spaces a short walk or bike ride from our doorsteps. We will create good jobs in strong, local economies. Not a bad start towards a more sustainable future.

2. Challenge Ourselves: Market Solutions

- Develop co-ordinated national campaigns to promote solutions that help people live better with less

Campaigns are key. They are the boots on the ground; the tangible evidence of forward progress. They offer opportunities to collaborate.

But there is another important reason to focus on campaigns. They are the all-important investments in the social and municipal infrastructure that will facilitate the transition to a sustainable and healthier future.

Collaborative campaigns are already a strong part of the voluntary sector culture. We have campaigns around endangered spaces and species, green power, local food, urban sprawl and many other issues and solutions. Some are ad hoc, others have lead organizations or co-ordinating networks. There is a solid foundation of experience in campaigns that will underpin a new effort at marketing solutions.

With a strong focus on measurable results at a macro level (i.e., shifting national trends), each campaign should link marketing, services and policy expertise into a seamless alliance. Here are ten suggestions for campaigns:

1. **Redefine wealth**

Make genuine progress sing. Start with the Vital Signs and Canadian Index of Wellbeing (see discussion above), connect with groups that promote and provide solutions, and build a national campaign to have government priorities and reporting align with the indicators of genuine progress.

2. **Great neighbourhoods**

Imagine Canada as a nation of villages – our cities as a collection of vibrant neighbourhoods that are pedestrian and bike friendly with a strong local economy and plenty of amenities. The future is local, even within a global economy. Health, culture, jobs, and the environment all come together to help design great places to live.

3. **Safe cycling**

Cycling is catching on. From kids to seniors, local to tourism, cycling is becoming a preferred mode of transportation, not just an

alternative mode. Time for our infrastructure to catch up. ‘Safe cycling’ combines cyclist and motorist education with the need to invest in better bike paths. Quebec has provided much of the leadership on this issue, and every other province should follow its example.

4. Public transit

Transit will define our future. It will determine whether our cities will be gridlocked or vibrant. The cost of building efficient transit systems should be amortized over a century, and the ongoing operating costs subsidized through carbon taxes or congestion charges. Market the vision; make it tangible and affordable.

5. Green power

Lower power bills with green power. As the price of renewable power continues to fall, the combination of conservation and renewables holds the potential to have a dramatic impact on both household and government electricity costs. Lower bills combined with home and community power has the potential to transform the electricity sector from centralized production to a decentralized grid. Consumer advocates, economic development, fiscal responsibility, and the environment all benefit by investing in conservation and green power.

6. Conserve resources

Energy may be the main driver of our economy, but it is not the only resource. Many other resources are under pressure, locally and nationally. Water, farmland, gravel, minerals, forests, and fisheries are all under pressure from overdevelopment. Focused, local campaigns rise and fall with each new proposed development. Perhaps it is time to link them together in a common campaign to conserve and protect Canada’s precious resources.

7. Great food

The way to a nation’s heart is through its stomach. We love great food, whether we grew it ourselves or dined out at a local restaurant. Local and sustainably grown food supports the environment, the local economy, health, the environment, and promotes a high quality of life. This is a great opportunity for governments, farmers, cultural and social organizations, and environmental groups to come together on an issue that promotes quality of life, a local economy, and a healthier environment.

8. Great jobs

If money was all that mattered, there’d be no farmers. As the economy gets tighter, we will need to find new approaches to job creation and economic development. A focus on ‘great jobs’ allows for an exploration of the quality of work – security or independence,

job satisfaction, commute time, personal growth, ethics, work environment, and community value are all factors that go into defining a great job. In particular, students, colleges and universities, unions, business, and community economic development groups should be involved in a campaign to stimulate and support a resilient, local, and sustainable economy for the future.

9. Nothing to waste

There is more to waste reduction than a recycling bin. We are still a disposable nation, from the planned obsolescence of the products we buy to plastics and hazardous waste in our landfills and streams. A focus on waste could include both solid and hazardous waste, households and business, non-point and major sources, and the economic and environmental benefits of waste reduction and avoidance. Both focused programs and national campaigns would benefit from an overall message to keep Canada clean.

10. Enjoy nature

From urban greenspace to national treasures, Canada is nature. It is part of our national psyche, and how the world sees us. Canadians should be encouraged to enjoy nature in our backyards, be it on our street or in a provincial or national park. We should do our part: plant trees and wildflowers, clean up local rivers and beaches, and protect endangered spaces. There is a logical flow from personal enjoyment to a commitment to protect nature, and there should be a strong alliance between schools, community groups, eco-tourism, and nature groups to ensure our connection with nature remains strong and personal.

More information on each of these campaign ideas can be found on the Canada Conserves website, <http://canadaconserves.ca/conserver-solutions/>, including factsheets on current initiatives in each of these areas.

Campaigns happen all the time – they rise and fall with the issues. It's time to up the ante. What would make this new wave of campaigns different is their proactive nature and broad alliances that would link social, economic and environment goals. In a word: convergence. They can emerge organically (see the section below on organizing ourselves) or they could be the result of a major funder or funders (government, foundation or corporate), establishing a multi-year fund around a campaign theme.

The funders are the first step in the process, both existing and new. Therefore the next critical step is to raise new money.

3. Raise New Funds: Finance the Future

- Raise new funds
- Build the national commitment to invest in our future

A strong national vision of Canada and clear priorities and campaigns will create new priorities and opportunities for funding. The shift in emphasis that is already happening from advocacy to implementation – from talking to doing – is creating new areas of need. The concept of convergence – solutions that combine environmental, economic and social goals – will generate overall efficiencies but it will also shift the environmental movement into the social services and economic development sectors. Additionally, many of the solutions will require significant government investment in the infrastructure of sustainability, be it public transit, distributed power, or urban villages.

Raising new funds

Funding for the environment has traditionally been around three percent of charitable giving in Canada. We can change that by integrating the environment with social and economic priorities, and with a clear focus on campaigns for a stronger Canada.

In part, we can address the gap in environmental funding through fundraising for each of the national campaigns (see the previous section), or through a new Transitions campaign to connect major Canadian and global issues with on-the-ground solutions. The purpose is to provide funding to assist with the transition of Canadian society and the economy to a vibrant and sustainable future. A Transitions campaign would provide an umbrella for collaboration between funders, and it would support a diversity of projects, including:

- Urban design (urban villages, complete communities, compact development)
- Transportation alternatives (transit, safe cycling, walkability)
- Food security (community food, local markets, sustainable agriculture, foodland preservation)
- Energy security (conservation, green power)
- Good jobs (environmental responsibility, local economy, social ventures, green tech etc.)

One benefit of a Transitions campaign is the ability to integrate a wide range of issues into the overall vision of making Canada “a great place to live” and the focus on “living better with less.” The term “transition” allows us to recognize that there are major threats to our conventional way of life while addressing them in ways that will allow us to enhance our overall quality of life.

A Transitions campaign can be hosted by Imagine Canada, Tides Canada, Community Foundations of Canada, and/or the Canadian Environmental Grantmaker's Network. The goal is to attract more benefactors, large and small to the cause and connect them with appropriate mechanisms for giving.

The added benefit of new funding is that it would demonstrate a commitment to national priorities and strengthen the case for our governments to align their funding and support for the same priorities.

Here are two ideas for new campaigns: the Giving Pledge Canada and One for All Canada.

The Giving Pledge Canada – challenge the thirty or so [billionaires in Canada](#) to establish their own charitable giving plan for half of their wealth during their lifetime or in their will. The current Canadians on the Giving Pledge could champion this cause.

[The Giving Pledge](#) is a U.S.-based effort to help address society's most pressing problems by inviting the world's wealthiest individuals and families to commit to giving more than half of their wealth to philanthropy or charitable causes either during their lifetime or in their wills. Started in the United States by Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffet, and with over 120 signatories, it is a major force in philanthropy.

There are three Canadians on the list. Jeffrey Skoll, the founder of E-Bay, was the first to sign in 2012. He has established the [Skoll Global Threats Fund](#) which includes climate change and water security as two of the five global threats. Charles Bronfman and the late Edgar Bronfman are also signatories with a long tradition in philanthropy.

One for All Canada – One for All would be a campaign to encourage Canadians who are in the top one percent income bracket to contribute at least one percent of their income to charity. In 2011, there were 272,600 members in the top one percent club with a minimum income of \$191,100, an average income of \$381,300, or a combined income of \$103 billion. Were the one percenters to pledge even one percent to charity, it would be a \$1 billion annual boost to charity.⁷³

The national commitment to invest in our future

The major challenge remains. We need to convince our governments to invest in the infrastructure of sustainability.

Let's take a moment to review the trends:

- Increased austerity
- Increased scrutiny and accountability
- Reduced political will around climate and sustainability issues

The issue is not so much one of ability, but of will. We hardly question \$45 billion for F-35 fighter jets,⁷⁴ whereas the \$16 billion for the Big

Move plan for transit in the Greater Toronto Area⁷⁵ has become mired in battles over funding tools and cost sharing between the three levels of government, the private sector, transit users and cars, and the public (or taxpayer).

The focus on solutions-oriented campaigns will serve an additional benefit of building public support for investing in our future. The more that people are personally invested in transit, safe cycling, livable neighbourhoods, green power and energy conservation, then the stronger the likelihood of a favourable response to calls to invest in the infrastructure of transit, green energy, local economies, and walkable communities. A strong personal commitment will translate into a strong political commitment.

4. Collaborate: Organize for Change

- Build constellations of interest
- Focus on collective impact
- Promote civic action across Canada
- Create transformative scenarios

These are hard times for networks, with core funding for networking an early casualty of austerity. Federal funding for the Canadian Environmental Network was cut in 2011, which affected all of its provincial affiliates as well. As well, most (if not all) of the round tables that were established around 1990 are now gone – the latest one to go being the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy that was axed last year. Our country appears to be losing the capacity to think collectively, and think big.

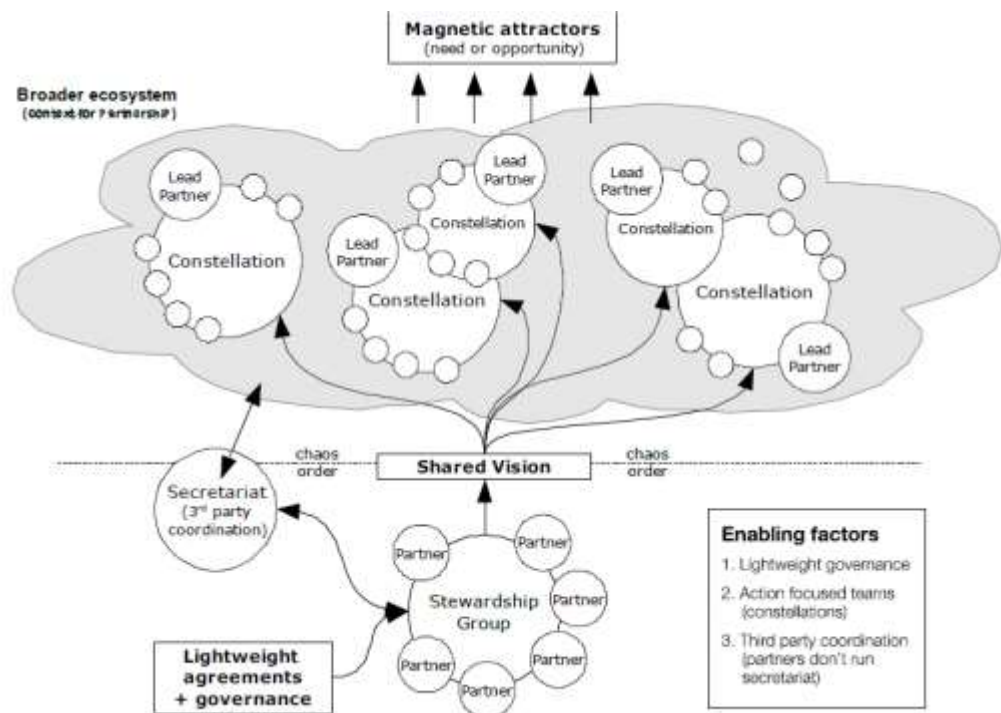
The old model of networking for networking's sake is on the way out. In its place, the emphasis is on professional networking and tightly focused coalitions. New networks are emerging around the new priorities, such as sustainable food and sustainable energy. They have a stronger business and social venture focus, but strong action component, choosing to lead by example rather than lobby for government action.

Here are four examples of collaboration: the Constellation model, CivicAction, Collective Impact and Transformative Scenario Planning. The first is issue based, the second is place based, the third is goal based, and the fourth is a deep planning process. Each has its benefits, and they can in fact be integrated into a hybrid application based on the specific circumstances.

The Constellation Model⁷⁶

In 2000, at the prompting of the Laidlaw Foundation, eight environmental organizations came together to plan a common approach to children's health and the environment. The eight became eleven, and together they formed the [Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment](#). They developed a 'constellation model', where groups come together around common areas of interest and develop proposals with a lead partner and supporting partners. The approach is dynamic, responding to both needs and opportunities, and is supported by a core secretariat or rotating host.

The constellation model has been used by a number of networking organizations, including the Ontario Nonprofit Network and the Ontario Literacy Coalition. It can be easily integrated into a traditional network organization, such as the provincial and Canadian Environmental Networks, providing a flexible project structure and new energy to our traditional policy-based networks. A key attraction lies in the focus on member-led initiatives, where the larger organizations play a leadership role and others contribute according to their capacity and expertise. This is different from the traditional one-group-one-voice format of policy networks, which eventually resulted in the larger organizations shifting their efforts to ad hoc coalitions. The constellation model offers an opportunity to revive our longstanding network organizations and give them new focus as part of a Canada 2050 strategy.



For more information of the constellation model, see <http://socialinnovation.ca/constellationmodel>

Collective Impact

A recent model that is fast gaining favour with funders is Collective Impact.

The Collective Impact approach was born out of the recognition that there were many different organizations serving a particular target audience, and each with a different mandate and skill set. Often, the actual needs of the client were overlooked.⁷⁷

Collective Impact challenges groups to go beyond the traditional collaborative model of shared agendas to start with an assessment of shared goals. It starts with an assessment of needs and desired outcomes as opposed to funding opportunities; it uses data and reporting to identify trends and effects as opposed to project results; it challenges participants to rethink their core activities as opposed to adding on activities; and it encourages groups to advocate for practical and proven solutions as opposed to theoretical ideas.⁷⁸

Given the convergence of environmental, social and economic goals, the collective impact approach makes sense. It is, however, an intensive and transformative process. This is not a process for the faint of heart nor the faint of funds. To be effective it needs to have up-front funding with a multi-year commitment to capacity building and re-tooling in order for organizations to participate fully in the process.



Source: <http://www.strivetogether.org/blog/2012/11/the-difference-between-collaboration-and-collective-impact/>

The Civic Action Model

When David Pecault and the Boston Consulting Group helped to create the Toronto City Summit Alliance in 2002, (now [CivicAction](#)) it was with the intention of bringing business and social leaders from across the Toronto region together to “advocate for and drive collaborative solutions to regional challenges.”

CivicAction represents the new wave of collaborative leadership – focused on doing, rather than advocating. The focus is on delivering solutions and empowering people, organizations and businesses across the region.

These are some of the key elements of the CivicAction model:

- shared vision, a clear sense of the future we wish to create;
- charismatic leadership, a well-respected individual or individuals in a voluntary and/or staff capacity;
- a strong base of power, either of the core members or through the support of a broad-based membership;
- tiered membership, including an inner core group, an advisory council and a broad network of participants, all of whom support the mission through their work and actions;
- core funding, significant and ongoing resources to develop and implement projects and campaigns;
- creativity, clear directions to implement the core values and vision;
- a focus on empowerment, where the mission of the organization and its leaders is to facilitate and support positive change.

ATTN: Premier WYNNE,
Mr. HUDAK &
Ms. HORWATH

People of the GREATER TORONTO and HAMILTON AREA (GTHA) have spoken. They are not about to take a back seat on TRANSPORTATION.

87% immediately agree public transit should be a regional governing priority.

83% of residents would be more likely to support a public transit authority if they were not also a politician and transportation expert.

59% of residents said they would more likely support a public transit authority if they were not also a politician and transportation expert.

189 (32) politicians from 47 parties have signed their names to support a public transit authority in the region.

Are you ready to take the wheel to fund a better transportation network?

LEARN MORE @ YOUR32.COM

32 MOVE - GTHA CivicAction

A CivicAction poster for their Your 32 campaign to promote investing in public transit.

CivicAction has been a galvanizing force for a wide range of projects in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area, including ‘The Race to Reduce’, an office building energy conservation challenge, and the transit focused ‘What would you do with 32’ campaign to raise awareness and support for improved regional public transportation.

This is clearly a model that needs to be replicated in other major municipal regions, provincially, and at the national level. With the right leadership and participation, CivicAction Canada would become the focal point for a national vision and related projects and campaigns.

Transformative Scenario Planning

How do we move mountains?

At the heart of the whole sustainability issue is the question of how we can transform ourselves, our society, and our economy onto a sustainable path. The trends seem insurmountable, for they are the result of our collective desire for wealth and success. We have seen the mountain, and it is us.

If there is an answer, it may lie in transformative scenario planning,⁷⁹ a process whereby a full and diverse spectrum of senior leaders engage in a scenario-building process that will transform their own perceptions. The process grew out of the adaptive scenario planning process that was developed by Royal Dutch Shell, and which allowed Shell to anticipate and react to the Arab Oil Embargo in the 1970s. The scenario process was used in South Africa in 1991 to help guide the peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy.

The adaptive scenario process can be used by any single company or organization to analyze what could happen, and be prepared to adapt. For example, the process can be used to develop possible scenarios under climate change and to help municipalities prepare for the possibilities of extreme weather or drought.

The transformative scenario process goes further in that it seeks to understand how a number of key players can help reshape our future. It starts from an understanding that the factional and combative approach is not working, that the future prospects are bleak, and that we need to step back from the fray and find new ways of moving forward.

Is Canada ready for Transformative Scenario Planning?

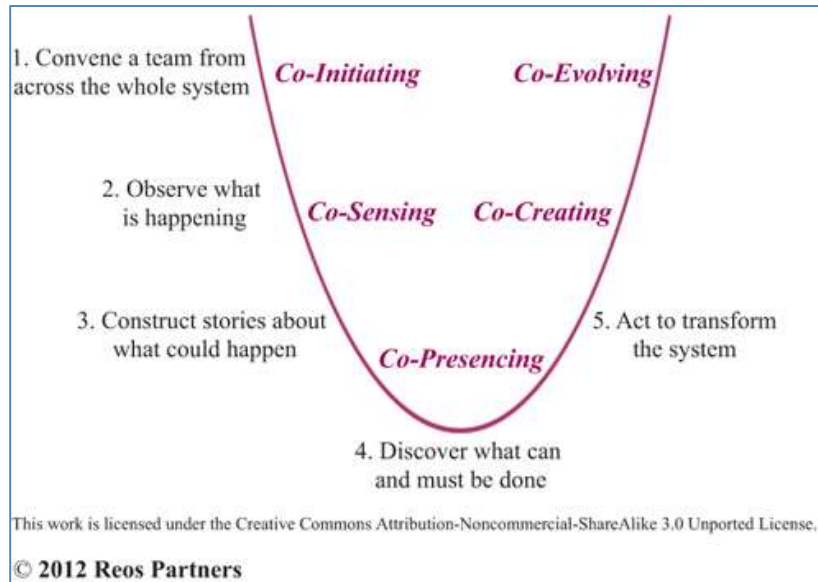
There have been a couple of attempts at transformative scenario planning in Canada: the Scenarios for the Future project in 1998 (focused on Quebec and separatism), and PowerUp Canada (looking at climate change and alternative energy).

On the one hand, we are in dire need of new approaches. We have seen our national vision and pride in Canada replaced by an obsession with tax cutting and jobs; our society and politics are becoming polarized, and our commitment to a sustainable future has been replaced by a series of battles over growth versus protection.

On the other hand, things don't seem bad enough yet. Transformative scenario planning requires a deep recognition across the board that we need to chart a new and collaborative course. As a nation, we may still not be ready to change.

According to Adam Kahane, one of the key people behind transformative scenario planning, the best results at the moment come from more focused social labs (or change labs) which allow participants

to tackle complex problems and test out potential solutions.⁸⁰ Call it transformative scenario lite, it is a good process to integrate into issue- or place-based networks.



The Transformative Scenario Planning model: [Reos Partners](#)

5. Lead: Build Leadership Across Canada

1. Find champions for Canada
2. Promote a distributed leadership model

Thus far, I have mapped out recommendations for a national vision, national priorities, funding campaigns, and mechanisms to improve collaboration. You're probably asking yourself, "How do you expect to do all this?" The answer is, I don't.

First, we need to find individuals who will be champions for Canada. There are big steps that require leadership from the country's top social, business, and political leaders: drafting a new national vision, collaborating on solutions and CivicAction, raising new funds, and supporting innovation. We need national champions who are leaders in their own right and who are willing to use their power to empower a movement.

The true Canadian leaders are ones who put national service ahead of personal gain. At first glance, this seems impossible. What political leader would sacrifice party gains for national consensus, what corporate leader sacrifice profit? But look further and there is potential.

Look not to those who are still fighting for their position, but to those who have achieved success and are ready to make a new contribution. Much as First Nations look to their elders for advice and guidance, it is our elders who will be the key champions for Canada. For example, if we want to restore confidence in governments we should look to past political leaders to set out the principles and guidelines for good governance. Their distance from the fray, combined with their insights and commitment to public service, make them ideal candidates for a non-partisan effort to restore public confidence in politics and governments.

Similarly, much as David Pecault (a senior partner of Boston Consulting Group in Toronto) set up the Toronto City Summit Alliance (now CivicAction), it is the senior business leaders who have the capacity, tenacity, and vision to shape the new collaborative leadership models that will focus on a sustainable and vibrant future for Canada. Add in the many social and environmental leaders who have a strong track record in standing up for Canada, plus emerging leaders from the next generation, and we have a strong list of Canadian leaders. The only question is, who will start the ball rolling?

Second, as stated at the outset, this is more of an organic approach than a formal strategy. It will likely be developed in pieces and individual initiatives, responding to the priorities and opportunities of the day. It will evolve over time. It's what I call a 'distributed leadership' model. We are all leaders, each according to our means. Anyone, any

organization, any business, or any government that can adapt and adopt any part of these ideas and recommendations is a leader.

This form of distributed leadership is equally important as the big leaders. Remember that we are dealing with serious environmental and resource trends that will invariably have serious impacts on our economy and standard of living. These impacts will shape our future: we will have to live with less. But we are resilient, we dream and we adapt. No one says “I want to live worse with less,” we find new ways to find enjoyment in our lives. It is in adapting to change where organic leadership happens.

6. Empower Others: A Focus on Voluntary Transitions

1. Create Innovation Centres
2. Support community networking and action.
3. Support projects and innovations that have the potential to support positive social and economic development across Canada.

Boil it all down, and there are basically two ways to promote change: through power, or by empowering others. In essence, it's the carrot or stick conundrum.

Herein lies one of the essential differences between the environmental and the green movements. The environmental movement uses a power model, and the green movement uses an empowerment approach. This is one of the main reasons why there has not been a strong alliance between the environmental and green movements: they have different methodologies and different objectives, even though they may be working toward the same end.

The traditional environmental model is to concentrate power in order to effect change. Petitions and protests are tools whereby people lend their voice to a cause. It is a highly effective approach for fighting individual battles, but it is not the best approach to changing society. In contrast, the green movement is about giving people the power to act in their own lives. Ideally, we need to combine both power and empowerment as complementary approaches to achieving common goals. We can stop sprawl if we can offer people affordable, family-friendly urban villages.

This does not mean that environmental organizations need to change their focus or approach, only that they need to build stronger alliances with organizations that deliver social change. Whether through campaigns, coalitions, or constellations, collaboration is good.

Beyond a collaborative approach, there are also a number of catalytic projects that, if scaled up to a national level, would have a significant impact in empowering change. These are the major investments that

funders and governments can make in the social and economic infrastructure for Canada 2050.

These projects can either be developed organically, individually, or part of a national Canada 2050 initiative.

1. Innovation centres

Ten years ago, in 2004, developer Margie Ziedler and social entrepreneur Tonya Surman launched an experiment in a shared office space: the [Centre for Social Innovation](#). The first space held a dozen small offices with shared common space and services. I was one of the original tenants, and I can say that the true value of the space was not shared office expenses, it was the shared ideas. Our common point of reference was that we were all small organizations working for social good, and we were able to share ideas and help each other. Ten years later, the Centre for Social Innovation now has three locations in the City of Toronto, and one in New York. There are 700 tenants, including virtual tenancy, hot desks, and full offices, and over 1,700 people in the social innovation community.

The support doesn't even need to be formal. As I write this section in my local coffee shop, ten people are gathered around a community table in a local business support group. The key point is the need to provide space and opportunities to nurture and support the creative social and entrepreneurial spirit that abounds across Canada.

Every municipality of 50,000 and up should have an innovation centre. It's a small investment in your local economy and community vitality.

2. Community action

In 1990, the federal government released its *Green Plan* with \$3 billion in funding over five years. As Executive Director of the Conservation Council of Ontario, I was asked to help design the public outreach campaign on toxics and pollution prevention. We countered with a proposal to develop Community Action Plans that would let community networks determine local priorities and projects. Seven Ontario communities participated in the pilot; three of them using their plans to secure provincial funding to become green communities and one of them, the City of Cambridge, still running a [City Green Strategy](#) twenty years later. The City of Toronto network ran a Toxic Free campaign in 1993 that helped lay the groundwork for a municipal ban on cosmetic pesticides.

Community action has evolved since then. There is a much stronger emphasis on integrated solutions and on social ventures. As a result, you could argue that the above-mentioned Centre for Social Innovation is a community network on steroids, which it is. The simple fact is,

community action works. A voluntary sector network doesn't cost much to maintain, it provides a strong foundation for innovation and collaboration, and it is a tremendous resource within the community.

So where does Canada stand now with respect to community action? On the one hand, there is a tremendous amount of activity and support:

- There are national organizations that support community action, such as Green Communities Canada, Earth Day Canada, and Transition Towns. There are also local initiatives, such as the Abundant Community Initiative in Edmonton, that focus on community assets and volunteerism.
- There are municipal programs, such as Live Green Toronto and Green Vancouver, that use social marketing and community grants to help meet municipal environmental goals.
- There are many funding programs for community projects, including the longstanding Friends of the Environment Fund and the Community Foundations of Canada. Most governments and foundations offer support for community projects, although the trend in community funding has been toward less funds and more reporting (see page 39).

What is missing is the full scale and consistent support of community action as the critical point of convergence for environment, economy, and society. Perhaps the best example of a co-ordinated approach is the Partners for Climate Protection program of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.⁸¹ The strengths are that 250 municipalities across Canada are part of the program, and that funding for municipal climate plans comes from a \$550 million federal endowment grant. However, the one limitation is that the program is geared more towards municipal action on climate change than on community action.

Drawing from *Community Action for the Environment*,⁸² a manual prepared for the Conservation Council of Ontario, here are some key components to look for in an organized community:

- ✓ A community network
- ✓ A community assets map (available skills and resources)
- ✓ A community vision (what makes, or will make, this a great place to live?)
- ✓ A community action plan (projects and collaborative campaigns for collective impact)
- ✓ Municipal commitment (infrastructure, funding, incentives, programs and support staff)
- ✓ Community support (sponsorship and volunteerism)
- ✓ Signature projects and campaigns

In short, every municipality in Canada should have a community action program with a clear focus on empowering individuals, groups, and neighbourhoods in the voluntary transition to a sustainable future. A new national initiative could co-ordinate funding and program support,

facilitate the exchange of ideas, and develop common campaigns for community action. This would be a challenging initiative, for the culture of individuality and creativity at the community level is not always a good fit with the culture of order and rules within bureaucracy. It would, however, be an excellent opportunity to develop new approaches based around the principle of empowerment.

3. A universal green leadership rating system

This is a marketing and communication challenge. We need to help people make sense of the many different logos, certifications and claims of environmental commitment. Something simple that builds on the detailed certification programs, and unites them into a simple visual rating system. Make it easy for people and consumers to navigate the sea of information and make decisions with a high degree of confidence.

The system I was working on at the Conservation Council of Ontario was a self-assessed five-star rating system, where the first star was for an initial commitment, and the second for ten actions commensurate with the size of the company or organization. The remaining three stars were for excellence in internal operations (behind the counter), products and services, and community support. It is an elegant way for companies, organizations and even governments to assess and promote their commitment to a sustainable future. It also encourages participants to use formal certification programs where appropriate, including ISO 14000, Forest Stewardship Council, Local Food Plus, SeaChoice, Ecologo, and 1% for the Planet.

4. A national green directory of products, services, programs and incentives

Building on the above rating system, we need a national directory to help connect people with the products, services, programs and incentives that will help them shift to a greener lifestyle. There are a number of green directories and help sites out there, but what we truly need is the engine for our movement – the online directory of organizations, businesses and governments that support the vision and priorities for Canada 2050.

We made a first attempt at a national green directory at the Conservation Council of Ontario, www.greatgreendirectory.ca, where you can see the potential for integrating a green leadership rating with a database that is searchable by solution and by community.

5. A national green card

One of the neat projects to come out of the Live Green Toronto community animation project was a [Live Green Card](#). The card is free to

residents, and it offers discounts on green products and services offered by local businesses.

What we truly need is a national version of the card, connected to the national green directory, but which can be adapted and adopted by participating municipalities. Each card would be branded with the local municipal green program (e.g., Live Green Toronto, Green Vancouver, EcoMontreal), but the cards would also tap into a national program and database of incentives.

6. Greenovation Awards

We should reward leadership and innovation across Canada, from the local and small up to the national and large. Why not replicate and integrate some of the existing awards programs into a country-wide recognition of living better with less.

Start with some of the existing awards, like [Live Green Toronto](#), the [Clean 50](#), Earth Day Canada's [Hometown Heroes](#), and the [Urban Leadership Awards](#). Create more community-based awards, both in municipalities and in communities of peers (NGOs and businesses). Develop a national award, linked with CivicAction Canada or the Lieutenant Governor, to recognize the best of the best in each type.

7. School Sustainability Challenge

Adapt the recommendations of *The Next Wave* for schools and tie a sustainability challenge in with existing school-based organizations and initiatives. Students respond well to challenge projects (e.g., urban design or solar design), so the idea of a school-based challenge around “live better with less” would set students the task of coming up with ideas that are creative, doable, and enjoyable.

This is doubly important because the next generation (or so) is likely the one that will have to live with the impact of climate change, scarcity, and a rising cost of living.

7. Review: Consultation and Continuous Improvement

1. Report on results and trends.
2. Engage stakeholders and the public in reviewing our progress.

A key part of any strategy is to review our progress and revise our plans accordingly. This is true of an organic strategy as well. Here are several tools that can contribute to the overall commitment to Canada 2050:

- The Canadian Index of Wellbeing and other genuine progress reports are key. They take the wealth of data on social, economic, and environmental trends and distil them into a single report and score that we can use to track our progress, and compare our progress with other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world.
- State of the Environment reports are an important subset of genuine progress. Regular reports on the state of the natural environment and natural resources (including consumption trends) are important for assessing the results of our combined efforts.
- Clear government strategies (municipal, provincial and federal) should promote solutions.
- A national conference on Canada 2050, perhaps as the signature event for CivicAction Canada.
- A national Canada 2050 website to track progress in government and collaborative strategies.

To recap:

*Stuff's gonna happen,
People will deal, then adapt,
Live better with less.*

Stuff's gonna happen: Extreme weather is becoming the new norm. Oil and other resources are passing their peak, yet world population and resource consumption continue to grow. Most likely, it is the impact on our economy and pocketbooks that will trigger meaningful change.

People will deal, then adapt: At first we will deal with whatever crisis comes our way and attempt to maintain the status quo and economic growth. The pressure to develop more remote, expensive, and risky resources will continue to rise. There will continue to be issues that need to be fought and a strong, ever-vigilant environmental movement is essential. Eventually, society as a whole will recognize the need to adapt, at which point the next wave of sustainability leadership will truly kick in.

Live better with less: The hope lies in human desire to live a better life, and for our children to have a better life. In the short term, this means we focus on solutions that will help us live better at the same time as we can reduce our ecological footprint. From small ventures to large scale investments in social infrastructure, we focus on laying the foundation for a new economy. In the long run, living better with less will become the new mantra of hope in an era of austerity.

There is no escaping the impact of exponential growth. Our current economic model will inevitably collapse under its own success, and the social and environmental consequences will be enormous.

Our current approach as a nation is to hope it won't happen in our lifetime, or that it will happen to someone else and not us. This approach manifests itself in wilful ignorance, denial, and outright vitriol. Science and rational discourse has no effect on this response. It will continue until crisis forces reality upon us, and perhaps even then...

The alternative is to focus on solutions people want – solutions that save us money, make us feel good, and improve our quality of life. Ignore the naysayers and focus on those who, for whatever reason, are interested in living better with less. We may not be able to stave off the serious environmental and resource crises of the future with this approach, but we can improve our lives and create a foundation for a more resilient local economy at the same time. We can make the inevitable transition to the post-consumer economy smoother.

The recommendations in this paper are designed to stimulate and support the voluntary transition to a more sustainable future. There are three ways that funders and organizations can move forward with these or similar recommendations:

1. **Organic** – to allow these recommendations to percolate into the emerging new approaches to funding and innovation
2. **Strategic** – to adapt and adopt specific recommendations into individual projects and campaigns
3. **Transformative** – to develop high-level implementation strategies.

Organic Development

The organic approach is the most likely outcome.

First, we can all support change through our own lifestyle and commitment. Anyone who lives with strong green values already knows this:

- Live your values
- Support environmental groups
- Support the innovators and ecopreneurs
- Invest in green
- Help others

Individually, we live better with less and we show others the benefits of our lifestyle. Collectively, we make change happen. We create demand for walkable communities, transit, bike lanes, fuel efficient cars, energy conservation, solar power, local food, a local economy, and local arts and culture.

Second, businesses and social ventures are essential to helping people live a greener lifestyle. Going car free is easy when there are car-sharing companies in the neighbourhood; eating local and organic food is possible with local farmers' markets and natural food distribution companies; co-ops and businesses make the shift to renewable power easy and affordable. The list goes on, but the key point is that a green lifestyle needs green businesses and social ventures. The goal for any new start-up is to make it easy, affordable, and above all desirable to live better with less.

The good news is that there is so much happening on the ground already. These are the relatively small positive trends that run counter to the major trends of environmental decline, resource scarcity and economic turmoil.

Make no mistake, organic change is not easy. It is a conscious choice by individuals, and hard work by dedicated individuals, entrepreneurs, and organizations. It is messy, in that it involves trial and error, and learning from our experiences. It is organic in the sense that it is occurring

naturally in response to both values (voluntary change) and circumstances (austerity), and it will likely continue to grow whether we choose to encourage it or not.

Organic change is inherently local, but that does not mean small scale. It is individual choice influencing our economy, community action across the country, and entrepreneurial and social ventures that can scale up or be replicated. It is also individual businesses and business communities meeting their own challenges of rising costs through efficiency and design. Organic change reflects the understanding that we are all leaders, each in our own way.

In the end, it is organic change, whether through choice or by crisis, that will define Canada as a sustainable society. For this reason, the primary focus for strategic initiatives by funders, organizations, and governments needs to be on empowering voluntary, organic change.

Strategic Initiatives

We can nudge organic change through individual projects and initiatives that promote living better with less, such as:

- a sesquicentennial vision
- a Genuine Progress campaign
- innovation centres
- marketing and promotion
- government incentives
- independent projects
- your own ideas

The concept of ‘nudging’ is an important one. Innovation and leadership are all around us, and a bit of help may be all that is needed to make a difference. Whether it is providing the physical office space, common social marketing, or economic incentives, there are cost-effective actions that funders and governments can support that will be a catalyst for organic change.

Canada’s governments, funders, and social leaders can integrate this approach into their strategic planning and initiatives, for example through:

- municipal action plans and community action programs
- provincial and federal action plans
- CivicAction collaborations across Canada
- collaborative transition campaigns around key solutions.

Transformative Initiatives

There are two ways to move forward in a more organized, strategic fashion. The first is with government leadership through high-level strategies, action plans, legislation, fiscal instruments and support

programs. The second is for Canada's leaders to step forward and organize a co-ordinated national strategy based on voluntary leadership in support of a common national vision.

Ideally, we will do both.

Every senior government has a climate action plan and/or a sustainable development plan. When they come up for review, they present an opportunity to present a new and integrated approach to planning for our future. The truth is, we don't need another climate plan – what we truly need are high-level government plans that fully understand the threats to our economy and quality of life (including climate change); that provide a positive vision of genuine progress in the environment, economy, and our quality of life; and that engage all ministries in implementing solutions.

A radical ask, to be sure, but at the very least the next wave of climate plans should have a strong social and economic vision that, if implemented by all ministries, will also reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Governments respond to pressure, so in the end, the ultimate question is how can we generate the pressure on our governments to adopt a new, integrated, and positive approach to creating the future we all want. This pressure will happen organically, but the change will happen faster if Canada's social leaders are able to lead the call for a new approach. Key to this is the ability of the funding community, either existing funders or new champions, to take up the cause. Perhaps Mark Sarnier's challenge to the environmental funders (p. 51) to set aside 25% or \$33 million for advocacy is the way to go if it can kickstart the next wave in planning for collective impact and high level government leadership in Canada.

Canada's funders (both foundations and corporations) have a strong history in strategic planning. Individually, they all assess the trends and threats relevant to their mission and develop funding priorities. Individually, they have funded many of the initiatives that the recommendations in this report are based upon. Collectively, they network and collaborate to share ideas and tackle common priorities. Collectively, and with the advice and involvement of Canada's social leaders, they can develop new strategic directions for Canada's voluntary sector organizations.

With enough high-level support, we can look at developing a nation-wide commitment to sustainability by 2050, a CivicAction Canada model, challenge campaigns, and a national transition strategy based on the Collective Impact model or a transformative scenario planning process.

The answers are within our grasp.

The Leadership for Change

Perhaps the most critical question of all is where will the leadership for the next wave come from? Is it possible to have a national sustainable strategy?

The recommendations and project ideas outlined in this report actually represent a strategic approach to promoting sustainability in Canada (see next page). In the course of writing this paper, I have wrestled long and hard with the question of how a national strategy could be set in motion, and who would lead it.

There is no formal Canadian sustainability strategy, but there is a road map, and there are a number of key actions that can get us on the right road, such as:

- a national collaboration (e.g., CivicAction Canada)
- integrated high level government strategies
- community action programs at the municipal level
- NGO-led social marketing campaigns

They would actually be challenging and transformative actions. A national collaboration would require setting aside personal agendas and aspirations to work on a national vision; integrated government strategies would be a major challenge to the current silos of government ministries and the pressure for measurable results; community action would shift municipalities from public consultation to public empowerment; and NGO social marketing campaigns would challenge groups to achieve their goals through voluntary change instead of lobbying for policy change.

This also presents the funders – primarily the environmental foundations of Canada – with a special challenge. Your challenge is to take the collective impact model and apply it to yourselves. How can you collaborate to best support the many individual recommendations contained in this report?

For the moment, even the big plan will be organic, and it will be implemented through individual initiatives.

So Where Next?

If this report is more a map than a strategy, where do we go next? Are there some immediate opportunities? Of course there are.

Build a better map. Document leadership across Canada. Better mapping is the foundation for increased collaboration and strategic initiatives. Some of this can be accomplished via the Canada Conserves website:

1. Document provincial and federal initiatives
 - a. [high level government strategies and initiatives](#)
 - b. high-level cross-sectoral collaborations
2. Document [campaigns and leadership in promoting solutions](#)
3. Map [community action](#) across Canada
4. Develop a national directory of products, services, incentives, and programs to help people live better with less.

Rethink climate action. The next provincial or federal climate plan to be reviewed (and it will likely be Ontario's) is an opportunity to put the recommendations on integrated high-level strategies into practice. Let the climate imperative be the driver, and the solutions be clearly focused on helping us live better with less carbon. Give us a positive vision for 2050, and the tools to make it happen!

Start a campaign. Take one solution and run with it. Put the principles of convergence and collective impact into practice. Build a truly national collaboration, make a major investment or raise new funds, and aim to make a measurable shift in both public commitment and public policy.

Organize a community. Start with a few pilot communities and organize for the voluntary transition to a sustainable future. Identify community goals for living better with less (a village centre, walkability, transit, safe cycling, community power, local food, an innovation centre, etc.). Identify a community network and build an inventory of assets; secure funding and municipal support; develop a five-year rolling action plan; and celebrate success.

Talk it up. From backyards to boardrooms, talk about our future. Come up with your own ideas, or adapt and adopt any of the ideas presented in this paper.

A Final Word

Nothing in this report is truly new. It's based on trends we know are happening, and on initiatives and solutions that are already in place. We know the problems, and we know the answers. We just need to push ourselves to make it happen.

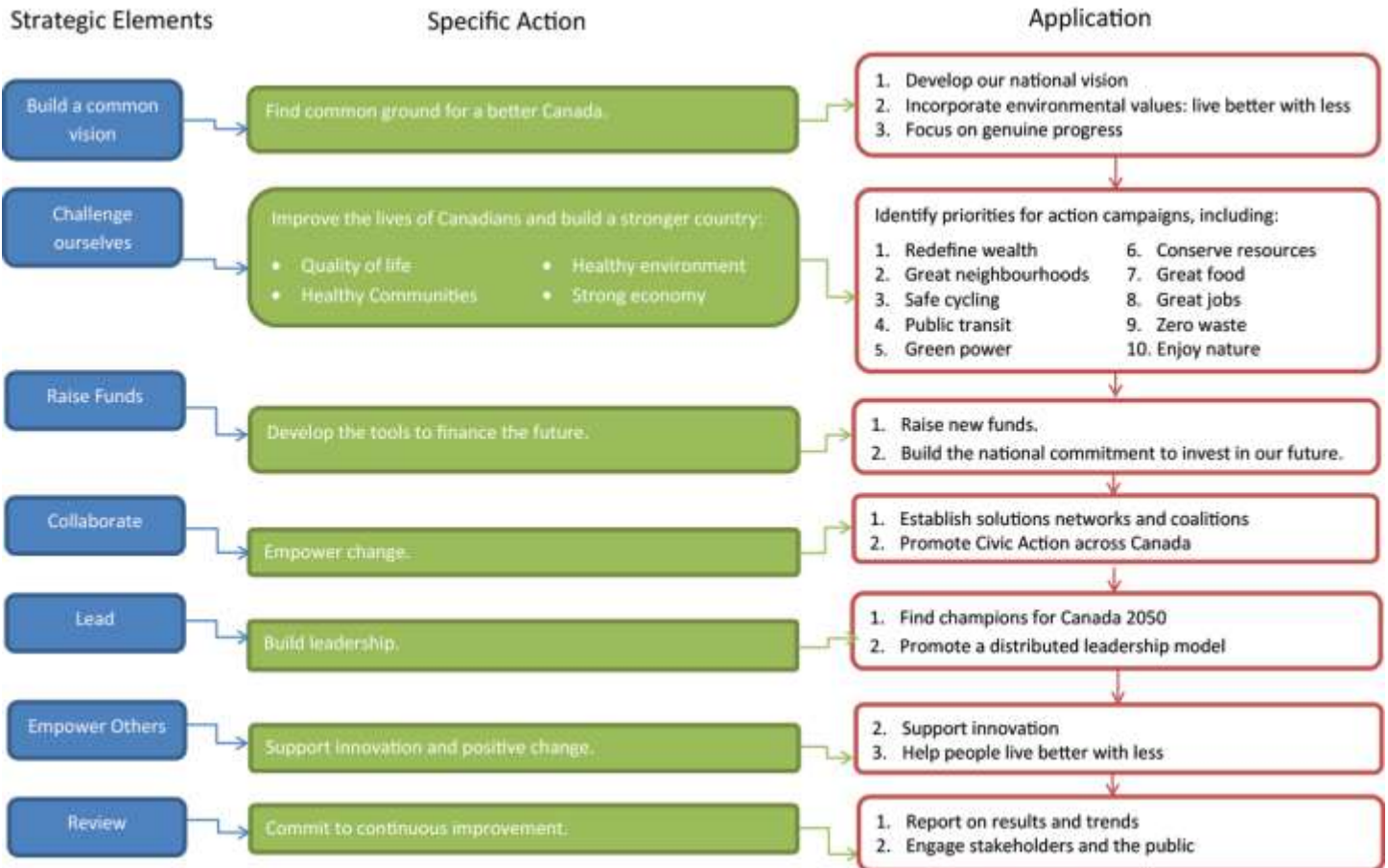
To paraphrase Pogo (Walt Kelly), "We have met the solution, and it is us."

My thanks to those who supported and contributed to this research, and to all of you who have taken the time to read and digest this report and these recommendations.

It is never easy to distil the problems of the world into a single report and a set of recommendations. It is even harder to take them the next step and turn them into on-the-ground solutions. I hope this report has provided you with some useful insights, and my best wishes to you in your endeavours.

Summary Chart

The following chart provides an overview of how the recommendations in this report fit into an overall strategic framework.



Appendices

Additional research conducted in support of the project

These reports are available as a separate download:

1. Canada's High-Level Strategies:

The role of strategic plans to identify and solve major issues

<http://canadaconserves.ca/pdf/High%20Level%20Strategies.pdf>

2. Communicating Priorities

2014 Canadian Government Website Review

<http://canadaconserves.ca/pdf/Communicating%20Priorities.pdf>

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