

The Talon

Vol. 29, No.7, September 2019



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN is an incorporated not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

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Research Partner with The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe (www.zephyrsociety.ca)

Member: Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Member: Ontario Greenbelt Alliance

Note: Please renew your membership to receive future Newsletters

NOTICE to Members: SLSN Regular Monthly Meetings in Fall/Winter 2019 changing to **Sunday afternoons from **Tuesday nights!****

The York Regional Police are no longer making their Community Room available for evening meetings. This potential situation arose in 2017 but was not fully implemented until recently, so we had the use of the room, but no longer. During this summer the situation permanently changed, and we were notified that the YRP will not allow groups to meet at their station on any evening. The room is not available after 6:00 p.m.

Investigation of alternative venues these last 2 years has not resulted in a better meeting place. As a result, this summer, when the final decision of YRP (current

Superintendent) was communicated, conversation with key executive members in August resulted in agreement to choose a new day and time that we can have our meetings at the police station in their Community Room. From past and present research and investigation there are no other comparable facilities that meet well our varied needs: for close and safe parking, building accessibility, comfortably sized and flexible room, kitchen counter (power & water), washrooms, availability, centrally located in Georgina, excellent security, permanent audio-visual facility capability, and financially feasible. Executive members also met in August and reviewed the opportunity for the fall meeting program, detailed in the newsletter. **We have decided that Sunday afternoon meetings 4:00 p.m. would allow us to continue at the YRP police station's Community Room in September and November. The Annual Autumn Event will be at Egypt Hall on Tuesday, October 8, 2019.**

The first meeting is on Sunday September 22nd and we'll try a couple of Sundays until settle on the second Sunday of each month. Let's see how this works. Interestingly, some opportunities have been identified with this meeting day and time including the potential for some long-time members that do not want to drive at night to attend an afternoon meeting, lessen the potential for night driving hazards, and more potential for younger families with children to attend. Also, the opportunity for members that have weekend commitments out of town to be able to return home and attend an SLSN meeting on the way is a plus.

I hope all of you had a great summer! **The fall meetings are listed below with usual details of topics and speakers. Please note the dates and times for planning your fall schedules.**

Paul Harpley SLSN

Meetings and Outings

Meetings: All Meetings start at 4:00 p.m. at the York Region Police Building Meeting Room (Baseline Road between McCowan

and Civic Centre Road) unless noted otherwise. No July or August and January Meetings. Members events (insurance compliance).

York Regional Police, 3 District Community Meeting Room
3527 Baseline Road, Georgina.



NOTE: Consistent with YRP recent procedures in place regarding meeting use of their Community Meeting Room (CMR), attendees of SLSN meetings must be current members of SLSN in good standing, and may be asked to provide further information, as requested.

Sunday September 22: "Introduction to Astronomy" Jeffrey Boylin SLSN member will present an illustrated talk on an introduction to Astronomy for the naturalist. Our ancestors saw the sky as a star scape just as we see a landscape on earth today. Early naturalists in Europe and America in the 17th and 18th Century considered a detailed knowledge and understanding of the night sky an essential skill of the naturalist.

Tuesday October 8: Loggerhead Shrike – endangered species and the Carden Plain - ANNUAL SLSN Autumn Event – Egypt Hall: Hazel Wheeler's illustrated presentation will focus on this important rare bird in southern-central Ontario. Hazel is the lead biologist for the Eastern Loggerhead shrike recovery program with the Wildlife Preservation Canada organization. She will talk about the recovery program and the rare and unique Carden Plain alvar habitat.

The special illustrated presentation from our guest speaker, will be followed by the annual silent auction and baked goods for sale as in past years, and other special features, and refreshments. Club members are asked to please donate a few, but unique auction items AND home-baking.

Sunday November 10: “ Birds of South Central Ontario”.

Film presentation by local photographer and filmmaker Wendy Michael. Wendy will show her film on birds of south-central Ontario ranging in from the Greater Toronto Area to Algonquin Park. Film screening will be followed by conversation and questions about wildlife photography methods and technical information and of course about the birds in the film.

Outings: All regular outings – Note: **Paid-up members in good standing may participate (for insurance compliance).**

2019 Winter

Wednesday October 16: Nature Study Expedition and Birding: An afternoon of searching for and identifying autumn native mushrooms, ferns and their allies, in a Regional Forest area, where in the spring we documented early summer fungi. This outing is part of a long-term identification and monitoring project of these taxa. We will also do some light hiking and area birding as conditions determine. Meet at 3:30 p.m. at the Coffee Time Plaza parking lot, Highway 48, south of Baldwin. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars etc.

Wednesday October 30: Lake Simcoe Birding: The Annual Autumn waterfowl broundup, and lake migrants surveying outing. We will also search for lingering shorebirds, ducks, and uncommon gulls etc. At this time waterfowl are moving through South Lake Simcoe. This year with the forecast seasonally warm temperatures a projected late migration, timing later in October should catch key migrants. Migration through our area can happen quickly for many species, so be prepared for rarities. Meet at Tim Horton’s in Sutton at 8:30 a.m. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars. Plan for a minimum of 3 hours.

Members please consider writing and submitting an article to the “Talon”.

Phone Paul 905-722-8021 or Norma 905-476-4747 for further information about meetings and naturalist outings.

York Region Forest News

The Region's Invasive Plant Control contractor will be undertaking work in the Bendor & Graves, Hollidge, Eldred King, Nobleton, Drysdale, North and Zephyr Tracts of the York Regional Forest commencing Monday July 15, 2019. The operation is expected to last until October 1st at the latest, with the majority of work taking place between now and August 15th. The target species for control this year are dog-strangling vine, Manitoba maple, European buckthorn, garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed and some Phragmites. Optional work may be carried out at Walter's and Davis Drive Tract to treat dog-strangling vine should previously treated areas prove to require control again this year.

For the safety of the public and workers please keep clear of the operation. Sites are to be signed 24 hours in advance of any work and should be removed within 72 hours after treatment. Please feel free to forward this email to other forest users. If you have any questions regarding this operation please contact me by replying to this email or calling Dayna Laxton at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73119.

Lake Simcoe Watch



Andrew Scheer promises to restore the Lake Simcoe Clean-Up Fund

Andrew Scheer has promised to restore the Lake Simcoe Clean-Up Fund if he becomes Prime Minister of Canada (see "[Conservatives unveil climate plan, Lake Simcoe Watch all eyes](#)").

This is a step in the right direction. But we need more information about Mr. Scheer's proposed Clean-Up Fund. Specifically, what will its phosphorus pollution reduction targets be?

According to the Government of Ontario's *Lake Simcoe Protection Plan*, Lake Simcoe's phosphorus pollution must be reduced by 50% to 44 tonnes per year to prevent excessive weed growth and algae blooms and to protect our cold water fishery (e.g., lake trout and whitefish).

What you can do:

1. Please contact your Lake Simcoe MP and ask him: By how many tonnes will Mr. Scheer's Clean-Up Fund reduce Lake Simcoe's phosphorus pollution by 2026?

Barrie-Innisfil: John Brassard, John.Brassard@parl.gc.ca

Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte: Alex Nuttall, Alex.Nuttall@parl.gc.ca

Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock: Jamie Schmale, Jamie.Schmale@parl.gc.ca

Simcoe North: Bruce Stanton, Bruce.Stanton@parl.gc.ca

York Simcoe: Scot Davidson, Scot.Davidson@parl.gc.ca

2. Please sign our [SaveSimcoe.org](https://www.savesimcoe.org) petition asking our municipal, provincial and federal leaders to work together to reduce Lake Simcoe's phosphorus pollution by 50% by 2026.
3. Please [order a Save Simcoe lawn sign](#) for your front yard.

Lake Simcoe Watch is a joint initiative of AWARE Simcoe, the Innisfil District Association, the Lake Simcoe Association, the North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance, the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists, the STORM Coalition and the West Oro Ratepayers' Association. www.lakesimcoewatc.ca.

Bird Research and Conservation News

Why do birds sing?

Posted by [EarthSky Voices](#) in EARTH | July 25, 2019

Birds spend a lot of time and energy singing, but they don't do it the same way in every season of the year. And some can't sing at all. What's the purpose of birdsong?



A male olive-backed euphonia (*Euphonia gouldi*), photographed in Costa Rica. Image via [Andy Morffew](#).

By David Steadman, University of Florida

Birds are some of the most attractive creatures on earth. Who doesn't like to watch a blue jay, cardinal or going about its business?

But the beauty of birds isn't just their looks – it's also their noises. Bird songs are among nature's most distinctive and musically satisfying sounds. Why do birds spend so much time and energy singing?

There are two main purposes, and they are connected. First, male birds sing to mark territories. A singing bird is saying, "This place is mine, and I'm willing to defend it, especially from others of my species." He may patrol his chosen space and sing often, either from the middle or the edges of what he considers his turf.

The second purpose of singing is to attract a mate for nesting. Female birds often choose their mates based on some blend of visual and vocal cues. Even male birds with beautiful breeding-season plumage can have trouble finding mates if their songs don't measure up.

Each bird species typically has its own unique song. That allows an individual bird to hear a song and recognize whether the singer is from its own species.

Birds are most vocal during nesting season. For example, in Florida where I live, cardinals live year-round. They usually start singing in January, just a few weeks after the days begin to get longer. After the nesting period is over, birds sing much less and their territories break down. *Birders can learn to recognize different bird species by memorizing the sonic patterns of their songs.*

Many species of North American birds migrate with the seasons instead of staying in one place all year. As they fly south in the fall, they make little "chip" notes or "contact calls" that allow them to stay in touch with other birds.

In many species only male birds sing, but in others, both males and females sing. And some birds don't sing at all. For example, vultures and storks can barely produce any sound – let alone something musical enough that we would call it a song...

David Steadman, Curator of Ornithology, Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida

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Bottom line: Why birds sing.

2019-08-28

Audubon

Cigarette Butts impact on Birds



Black Skimmer feeding its chick a cigarette butt.

It's time we kicked the habit

This disturbing photo taken on St. Pete Beach by a Florida Audubon volunteer is proof that the world has a seriously bad habit: cigarette butt pollution. **Each year, about a trillion cigarette filters end up as litter worldwide.** From public beaches to remote hiking trails, the chemical-laden butts are thoughtlessly tossed just about everywhere—**and become a real danger for birds.**

Birds that ingest single-use plastic filters can experience vomiting, seizures, and often death. But studies have shown that cigarette butts have a negative impact on a variety of wildlife. Read more about the wide-ranging damage caused by cigarette butt pollution and the growing efforts to put an end to the mess.

Climate Change Chronicles (A SLSN member Newsletter Feature that translates brief major global environment events relevant to the science and humanities challenges of this urgent planetary dilemma). P.H

2019-07-25

New Scientist

Unprecedented warming

The global warming caused by humanity since the industrial revolution is without parallel in the past 2000 years. A new study reconstructed temperature records for two millennia from proxies including tree rings, coral and glacier ice. Hot and cold periods such as the 'Roman warm period', which were thought to be global, were actually regional events, the analysis found. In contrast, the rise in temperatures during the past two centuries has been felt across 98 per cent of Earth's surface.

Journal reference: *Nature*, [DOI: 10.1038/s41586-019-1401-2](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1401-2)

Climate mistake reveals Earth warmed more than we thought last century

ENVIRONMENT 5 July 2019



Human-drive global warming is worse than we thought
Tim Robberts/Getty

By Michael Marshall, New Scientist

An oversight in historical weather records means we have underestimated how much the climate warmed last century. The finding means we are 0.1°C closer to passing the internationally-agreed limit of 2°C than we thought.

“Global warming has been stronger than we think,” says Rasmus Benestad of the Norwegian Meteorological Institute in Oslo, who led the analysis.

The problem stems from where the first weather stations were set up around the world. “At the start of the temperature records, you have most measurements from Europe ...

The end of coal

Electricity generation from coal power stations across Europe fell by nearly a fifth over the first half of this year, the steepest decline ever recorded. The sudden drop, driven by buoyant carbon prices and new installations of wind and solar farms, has led campaigners to say that 2019 may mark the beginning of the end for coal in Europe. Around half the coal was replaced by gas plants and the rest by renewables, according to an analysis by the London and Brussels-based think tank Sandbag.

New Scientist 2019-07-30

July 2019 confirmed as hottest month on record

B.B.C. News 5 August 2019



Image copyright AAP

July this year was the warmest month ever recorded worldwide, satellite data has confirmed.

The assessment was carried out by researchers at the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).

Scientists say it's the latest sign that Earth is experiencing unprecedented warming.

Scorching heatwaves saw records tumble across Europe last month, with unusually high temperatures within the Arctic Circle as well.

Globally, July 2019 was marginally warmer - by 0.04 degrees Celsius (0.072 Fahrenheit) - than the previous hottest month on record, July 2016.

July was 'marginally' world's warmest month ever.

However, it's notable that the 2016 record followed a strong El Niño weather event, which boosts average global temperatures beyond the impact of global warming alone.

The new July mark follows on from a global record for June, which was confirmed by data from several different agencies.

According to Copernicus, every month this year ranks among the four warmest on record for the month in question.

While researchers can't directly link these new high marks to climate change, there is a wide sense among scientists that emissions of carbon dioxide from human activities are altering background temperatures and making new records more likely.

Canadian Climate Emergency Declared – and Action

Vote for climate action, environmental protection and Indigenous rights this federal election

Let's work together to elect a federal government this October that will support clean jobs and Indigenous rights, lift-up underserved communities and reduce climate risk.

The best available science tells us we have 11 years to cut global emissions in half to avoid climate change's most damaging impacts and that Canada is warming at twice the global average. This is a key moment. **We must elect a government that will spend its next four years in office building a strong, diverse, equitable and clean economy.**

Please send a message to the MP candidates in your riding and to all federal party leaders that your vote depends on bold action.

David Suzuki Foundation.

Make your Voice Heard:

<https://davidsuzuki.org/>



food supplies at risk if climate
change not slowed, new UN report
shows

Canadian Press – Georgina Post

Climate Change Impact of Canadian Agriculture

Advertisement

THE CANADIAN PRESS 

OTTAWA — Canada will not be spared the impact of food shortages and price shocks if global warming is not kept below 2 degrees Celsius, a new report on land use and climate change suggests.

The report, released Thursday by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, delivers stark warnings about the need for drastic changes to agricultural practices, human consumption habits and forestry management to prevent an escalation in the climate-change-related floods and forest fires that could lead to a global famine.

The Paris climate change agreement is straining to keep global warming below 2 C and as close to 1.5 C as possible, and Thursday's report is the third in 10 months to lay bare the consequences if it fails. It also comes a week after the planet experienced its hottest month ever in July, following the warmest April, May and June on record.

At warming above 1.5 C, the report predicts periodic food shocks, significant and widespread melting of permafrost and an increase in the length of wildfire seasons.

Above 2 C, there will be sustained disruptions in food supplies all around the world, widespread increases in wildfire damage and detectable losses of soil and vegetation that can be attributed to climate change.

It is projected that for every degree of global warming, the world's yield of wheat will fall six per cent, corn by 7.4 per cent, and rice and soybeans both by a little more than three per cent each. Together those four crops account for two-thirds of the calories consumed by people, and with the population growing by 80 million people each year on average, the world needs to produce more food, not less.

Werner Kurz, a senior research scientist at Natural Resources Canada and one of two Canadians among 108 scientists who co-authored the report, said he doesn't think most people understand the magnitude and pace of climate change, but he also said he believes reports like Thursday's must be used to deliver potential solutions, not just nightmares.

“As scientists we need to be careful in sort of communicating doomsday scenarios because if we create a fearful world, then inaction will be the consequence,” he said. “People will be paralyzed and fearful.

“What instead this report is trying to do — and I hope is successful in achieving — is to, yes, lay out the consequences of inaction, but also then highlight the many opportunities we have for action and the co-benefits this has for livelihoods, for water.”

Kurz said to slow global warming, people need to burn fewer fossil fuels and improve how land is used, so that it not only contributes fewer greenhouse emissions, but also absorbs more of them.

The report suggests agriculture, forestry and other land use activities contributed almost one-quarter of the greenhouse gas emissions produced by human activity between 2007 and 2016.

That includes changing human diets to be more plant-based and less meat-based, because plant-based proteins require less farmland.

It also means diversifying the kinds of trees being planted in forests rather than focusing entirely on coniferous trees, which burn differently than deciduous trees. Using more wood to build things like houses and buildings and replanting with more diverse species can help regenerate forests, which become bigger risks for fires when they are old, he said.

But Kurz, whose job for Natural Resources Canada is to track the contributions forests make to Canada’s emissions, said there is a vicious cycle in play where climate change has made more forests vulnerable to burning, but that burning is then contributing to more climate change.

Catherine Abreu, executive director of the Climate Action Network Canada, said the idea of diversifying forests is critical to improving their management.

“Canadians and Canadian governments tend to think of our forests as carbon sinks rather than sources of emissions, but we know that has been false now for a couple of years,” she said.

Kurz acknowledged that the changes needed likely won’t come easily for many people, but he said understanding the implications of not doing it should help.

“What we need to realize is that how we choose to live will have an impact on future climate.”

Mia Rabson, The Canadian Press

Other Climate Change Science News

Planting trees could buy more time to fight climate change than thought

Earth has 0.9 billion hectares that are suitable for new forests

BY

SUSAN MILIUS

9:02AM, JULY 17, 2019



PLANTING TIME There's room on Earth for a lot more forests, a new study finds. Planting a lot of trees soon could capture carbon and buy time to cope with climate change.

A whopping new estimate of the power of planting trees could rearrange to-do lists for fighting climate change.

Planting trees on 0.9 billion hectares of land could trap about two-thirds the amount of carbon released by human activities since the start of the Industrial Revolution, a new study finds. The planet has that much tree-friendly land available for use. Without knocking down cities or taking over farms or natural grasslands, reforested pieces could add up to new tree cover totaling just about the area of the United States, researchers report in the July 5 *Science*.

The new calculation boosts tree planting to a top priority for gaining some time to fight climate change, says coauthor Tom Crowther, an ecologist at ETH Zurich. The study used satellite images to see how densely trees grow naturally in various ecosystems.

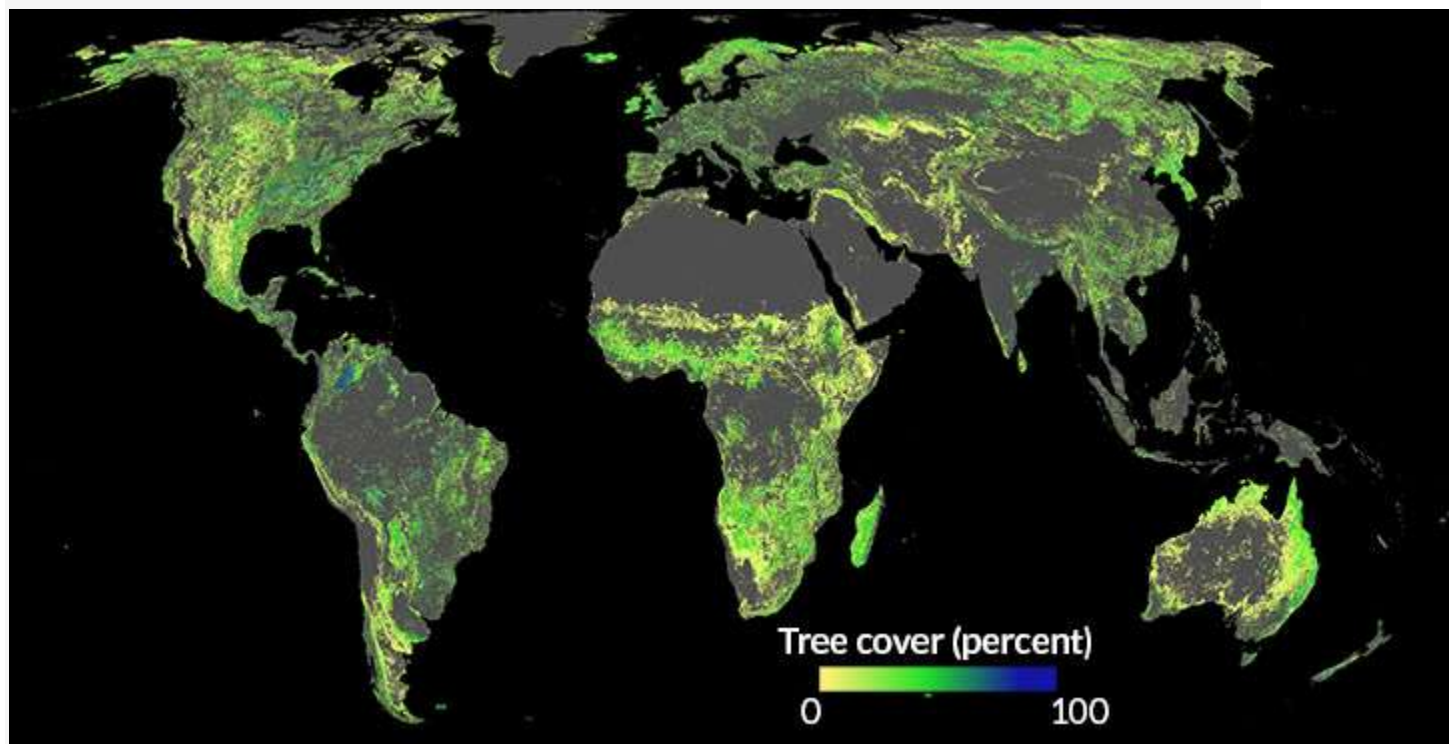
Extrapolating from those images showed how much forest similar land could support. Plant a mix of native species, he urges. That will help preserve the birds, insects and other local creatures.

The analysis revealed space to nourish enough trees to capture some 205 metric gigatons of carbon in about a century. That's close to 10 times the savings expected from managing refrigerants, the top item on a list of climate-fighting strategies from the nonprofit Project Drawdown, a worldwide network of scientists, advocates and others proposing solutions to global warming.

The benefit of tree planting will shrivel if people wait, the researchers warn. Earth's climate could change enough by 2050 to shrink the places trees can grow by some 223 million hectares if the world keeps emitting greenhouse gases as it does now, the analysis suggests.

More trees here

A map of the planet's potential to support new forests avoids cities, farmlands and natural grasslands to rate the remaining land as likely to support low (yellow) to high (blue) canopy cover.



Still, storing carbon is only one of the ways that trees could affect climate, says Cat Scott, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Leeds in England who was not involved in the research. Just how these other factors play off each other is not yet clear. She and colleagues have developed computer simulations of trees contributing to cooling a landscape by releasing airborne molecules that invite clouds to form.

Even something as simple as the darkness of tree leaves can change how much heat a landscape absorbs or reflects. Expanding forests into formerly snow-bright, reflective zones, for instance, might warm them. In the tropics, however, the enhanced cooling from clouds might be the more powerful effect.

Ultimately, in the struggle against climate change, such heroic tree planting merely “buys us time,” says study coauthor Jean-François Bastin, also an ecologist at ETH Zurich. But that’s time human societies could use to stop emitting greenhouse gases, the real solution to climate change, he says.

Climate Policy Excavations

2019-08-08

Canada’s National Observer

Tens of thousands sign petition demanding CBC host climate debate

By Emma McIntosh in News, Politics | August 8th 2019



Protesters, joined by faith leaders and members of Extinction Rebellion Toronto, took over the intersection of Yonge and Dundas streets in downtown Toronto on June 10 as part of a demonstration to declare a climate crisis. Photo by Nick Iwanyshyn

A group of activists in Toronto delivered a petition with nearly 48,000 signatures to the CBC Friday morning, asking the broadcaster to host a federal leader's debate on climate change ahead of the October federal election.

The petition was organized by four advocacy groups: Leadnow.ca and North99, along with the climate-change-focused 350 Canada and OurTime, which recently made headlines with a campaign for a Canadian Green New Deal. In a statement, LeadNow said the CBC has a responsibility as a public broadcaster to "provide a platform about this unprecedented national emergency so voters can clearly see where leaders stand on climate and what they're prepared to do about it."

"We look to political leaders to lead on serious issues like climate change, but there's so much misinformation and confusion," said Amara Possian, Canada Campaigns Manager with 350.org. "A federal leaders' debate focused on climate change and a made-in-Canada Green New Deal will give voters much-needed clarity on which parties have the best strategy to tackle the climate crisis head on."

The final signature total was 47,449, said LeadNow.

The environment has emerged as the top election issue for Canadians, found a study released Thursday by the Digital Democracy Project.

In the statement, the advocacy groups pointed to wildfires in Western Canada, heat waves in the east and north, shorelines that are disappearing as sea levels rise and severe floods — all extreme events that are becoming more frequent due to the climate emergency.

A group of activists plan to deliver a petition with over 45,000 signatures to CBC headquarters in Toronto Friday, demanding the broadcaster hold a federal leaders' debate on the climate emergency. Story by @EmmaMci #cdnpoli

CBC spokesperson Chuck Thompson said the public broadcaster recognizes how important climate change is, and that will be reflected in its election coverage.

"As I'm sure you are aware, CBC News has covered climate change extensively, and we will continue to do so," Thompson said in an emailed statement. "As to whether or not there will be a debate specifically about climate change, that question is best asked of the Leaders' Debates Commission."

The commission is an independent organization established by the federal government earlier this year to co-ordinate two leaders' debates before federal elections. The CBC is one of a group

of media organizations appointed by the commission to produce and stream the debates, as part of the Canadian Debate Production Partnership.

Jill Clark, a spokesperson for the commission, said the group has had discussions with several organizations that are interested in holding climate debates.

"We intend to stick to our mandate of producing two nationally televised and streamed debates, one in English, one in French that cover a variety of topics most important to Canadians," Clark said in an email.

"We believe that our debates don't preclude any other debates from happening and that we're always prepared to continue discussions with these groups and others."

Cherry Tsoi, a campaigner with LeadNow, told *National Observer* that Thompson came outside to hand-receive the petition as a group of about 70 chanted and gave speeches outside CBC headquarters. The activists will deliver copies of the petition to CBC newsrooms across the country next week, she added.

"The election is coming up and this is going to be a major focus for us," Tsoi said. "Whoever we elect will have an irreversible impact on our climate."

On July 17, protesters organized by 350 Canada demonstrated outside CBC offices across the country to make a similar request. And before that, the group organized a 10,000-signature petition asking the commission to hold a climate debate.

The advocacy group also penned an open letter to the CBC, which has been signed by over 40 public figures, including former CBC staff, Indigenous leaders, academics, activists and writers. Margaret Atwood, environmental activist Naomi Klein and Life of Pi author Yann Martel are on the list.

Right now, there are two debates expected ahead of the federal election, which must happen on or before Oct. 21. An English debate is proposed for Oct. 7, with a French one proposed for Oct. 10. Neither date has been finalized, but the events would be held in the Ottawa area.

The non-profit GreenPAC has also organized 117 local, climate-focused candidates' debates in ridings across Canada through an initiative called 100 Debates on the Environment. Those forums will take place on Oct. 3 — they were originally set for Oct. 7 but had to be rescheduled after the debate commission decided its English event would be held the same day.

Editor's Note: This story has been updated as of 4:10 p.m. on Aug. 9, 2019 to include the final number of signatures on the petition, comments from LeadNow, comments from the Leaders' Debates Commission and information on local climate debates happening across Canada.

Don't waste any more money on the Trans Mountain pipeline

By **Gordon Laxer** Opinion

Wed., June 12, 2019timer5 min. read

Justin Trudeau is in over a barrel. In 2015, he made a deal with Alberta. He would get an oil pipeline built to a coast if the province joined his pan-Canadian climate plan. After his election this past April, Conservative Alberta Premier Jason Kenney ripped up Alberta's side of the bargain and declared war on Trudeau's climate plan.

What should Ottawa do now after being jilted by Alberta?

Should the Liberal government maintain its side of the bargain, and proceed with the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline from Edmonton to the Vancouver area and lose credibility as a climate warrior? Or should it kill the pipeline expansion now and say this was a bargain gone bad.

In the long run, the latter course would save Ottawa lots on further subsidies. But there's that little short-run thing — the looming federal election on or before Oct. 21.

How could Trudeau explain taking a big loss of taxpayer money on a pipeline that no private sector investor would touch last year? Either choice will look bad. No good options is a predicament.

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW

Kicking the can down the road beyond the federal election is one way out. But Natural Resources Minister Amarjeet Sohi promised a decision by June 18.

Remember Justin Trudeau's grand entry onto the world stage at the Paris Climate Summit in November-December 2015? Canada is back, my friends. That was just six weeks after his stunning electoral upset, leapfrogging his party from third to first place, winning a solid majority.

In Paris, Trudeau and Environment Minister Catherine McKenna promised to catapult Canada from environment laggard under Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper to a global climate leader. While most rich countries at the Paris talks aimed to limit global warming to a 2°C rise above pre-industrial levels, Canada joined low-lying island states to champion a stricter 1.5°C global limit.

How then did Trudeau get stuck with a pipeline that makes no environmental or financial sense?

The pipeline is not going to change the fundamental disadvantages of Alberta's oilsands. At \$90 a barrel for new projects, their break even cost is among the highest in the world. And their emission intensity is through the roof. Environment and Climate Change Canada scientists found that CO2 emissions were more than 60 per cent higher than industry had calculated.

The sands are in a remote part of a remote, landlocked province. Their main market — the U.S. — where 99.9 per cent of Canadian oil exports now head, is now their main competitor. The U.S. produces cheaper, lower emissions oil.

The idea that the Trans Mountain expansion would open new markets in Asia is illusory. The price of heavy, sour crude oil in the Far East is \$1 to \$3 a barrel lower than on the U.S. Gulf Coast. Transport costs via the Trans Mountain line and tankers will be at least \$2 a barrel higher to Asia. China does not have the capacity to refine bitumen. Besides the world is swimming in light crude oil.

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW

In recent years, only a few oil tankers have left Vancouver harbour. Most of that oil has gone to the U.S., not China. So the premise behind the Trans Mountain pipeline is faulty. The pipeline expansion will likely be a white elephant, owned or subsidized by taxpayers.

The pipeline expansion could cost up to \$10 billion, in addition to the \$4.4 billion purchase price, that the auditor general said was \$1 billion too much.

If by some miracle the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is built, gets filled to capacity and finds markets, it would encourage the production of 590,000 barrels a day more oil from Alberta's sands. That would add another 13 to 15 megatonnes of carbon pollution.

So it doesn't make environmental sense either.

The Trudeau government got a special exemption in the new NAFTA (USMCA) to enable it to subsidize the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Why would a government so publicly committed to climate action throw more good money at a dodgy pipeline expansion, especially when Alberta has torn up its side of the climate understanding? Better to cut your losses now.

Gordon Laxer is a political economy professor emeritus at the University of Alberta and author of the Council of Canadians report "Billion Dollar Buyout. How Canadian taxpayers bought a climate-killing pipeline and Trump's trade deal supports it."

The Amazon Fires Coughed Up an Enormous Plume of Carbon Monoxide



George Dvorsky

Monday 10:50am

10.5K

181

GIF: NASA/JPL-Caltech

New satellite imagery shows gigantic plumes of noxious carbon monoxide wafting over Brazil's Amazon rainforest and surrounding areas—the result of massive forest fires currently raging in the region.

The new timelapse video was produced by NASA, and it shows the movement of carbon monoxide in the upper atmosphere above South America from August 8-22. Data for the video was collected by the Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS) instrument on the Aqua satellite. AIRS, in conjunction with the Advanced Microwave Sounding Unit (AMSU), detects infrared and microwave radiation from Earth. That allows scientists to create 3-D maps of the Earth's atmosphere, including elements such as temperature, humidity, cloud cover, greenhouse and trace gas concentrations, among other things.

These plumes of carbon monoxide are coming from the thousands of intentionally set forest fires currently raging in the Amazon rainforest—fires that have been linked to President Jair Bolsonaro's efforts to weaken Brazil's environmental laws and subsequent illegal land-clearing operations.



Brazil Deploys Troops to Fight Wildfires After Widespread Outrage at Bolsonaro's Government

Brazil has deployed nearly 44,000 soldiers as part of an operation to fight the rampant fires...

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AIRS data shows the carbon monoxide at elevations reaching 5,500 meters (18,000 feet). Looking at the video, the plumes first appear in the northwest region of the Amazon, and then drift both in a southerly and easterly direction—including a concentrated plume that travels towards Sao Paulo, home to 12.2 million people. The city saw the sky go dark at midday last week due, in part, to smoke from the blazes.

To create each frame in the video, NASA averaged the volume of carbon monoxide across three day increments. Red splotches show carbon monoxide at volumes reaching 160 parts per billion (ppb), while yellow shows 120 ppb and green 100 ppb. Local levels are likely “significantly higher,” according to NASA.

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Carbon monoxide from wildfires can linger in the atmosphere for around a month. This gas won't affect humans when it's in the upper atmosphere, but strong winds will likely bring it closer to the surface where it will impact upon air quality and human health. An info sheet from the New York State Department of Health describes the effects of carbon monoxide:

Inhaling carbon monoxide decreases the body's oxygen supply. This can cause headaches, reduce alertness, and aggravate a heart condition known as angina. Fine particles are able to travel deeply into the respiratory tract, reaching the lungs. Inhaling fine particles can cause a variety of health effects, including respiratory irritation and shortness of breath, and can worsen medical conditions such as asthma and heart disease. During increased physical exertion, cardiovascular effects can be worsened by exposure to carbon monoxide and particulate matter. Once exposure stops, symptoms from inhaling carbon monoxide or fine particles generally diminish, but may last for a couple of days.

Carbon monoxide can also exacerbate the effects of climate change. Though technically not a greenhouse gas, carbon monoxide “affects the abundance of greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide,” according to NASA's Earth Observatory. It also contributes to the formation of urban smog and unhealthy air.

Climate Change and Policy - Canada

2019-06-25

The Tyee

Trudeau's Climate Change Policy Is Strategically Inadequate

Approving a pipeline while declaring a climate emergency is 'climate change denial with a human face.'

By [Tristan Hughes](#) 21 Jun 2019 | TheTyee.ca

Tristan Hughes is an occasional social commentator and future PhD student at Princeton University



'This is how climate change denial will increasingly look in the future.' Photo by Mychaylo Prystupa.

The Trudeau government's recent actions — declaring a climate emergency and re-approving the Trans Mountain expansion project within two days — aren't just hypocritical:

they're morally equivalent to climate change denial.

And the extra question we'll pursue with your help (hint: pro-rep election reform).

The United Nation's authority on climate change recently [recommended](#) "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society" to counter an imminent crisis, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's recent decisions have flagrantly ignored the UN's counsel.

He's bent over backwards to ensure the Trans Mountain pipeline's expansion, propping up the project with extensive financial and rhetorical support. In the process, the Trudeau government has perpetuated the prerogatives of an industry that has [funded](#) climate change denying research and (knowingly) pollutes the planet.

Make no mistake: Trudeau's actions represent climate change denial "with a human face," a darker version of Czech communist leader Alexander Dubček's 1968 description of his ill-fated liberalization program as "socialism with a human face."

Trudeau and the Liberal party affirm the reality of global warming in theory, but they effectively deny the phenomenon in practice by facilitating a harmful status quo and belittling the urgency of radical change.

This is how climate change denial will increasingly look in the future: a mixture of symbolic proclamation and strategically inadequate policy.

With flooding, suffocating wildfires and abnormal temperatures across much of the country, the climate crisis isn't just a theoretical concern for most Canadians. Global warming's impacts are now apparent, a fact that's reflected in a recent poll showing that over two-thirds of Canadians consider stopping climate change "a priority."

Given an increasingly green electorate, politicians like Trudeau or Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer risk their electoral viability if they deny climate change outright, or fail to deliver convincingly effective climate policies. But the energy sector is a powerful constituency, too.

So how can the interests of the environmentally conscious and the environmentally destructive be reconciled?

One solution for politicians is to propose eco-friendly policies that still fall short of the minimum required to fight the climate crisis. They embrace entirely symbolic proclamations about climate emergencies, or carbon taxes that are woefully inadequate to meet the Paris Agreement 2030 emission targets.

This is the pragmatic compromise for politicians unwilling to deny the existence of a climate crisis, but equally reluctant to restrain the fossil fuel industry.



Trudeau Declared a Climate Crisis, then Backed Trans Mountain Again

Half measures such as the current carbon tax sustain the illusion that our governments are preventing global warming, and so placate those with tree-hugging tendencies. And unlike more ambitious proposals, a carbon tax does not fundamentally threaten corporations' perceived right to destroy the environment for profit (which probably explains the carbon tax's popularity amongst oil barons) and leaves the fossil fuel industry contented.

This is Trudeau's environmental policy: strategic inadequacy. Nothing effective enough to actually stop climate change and offend Husky's shareholders; nothing ineffective enough to anger worried voters.

As the UN report shows, tackling global change will involve a significant shift in our modes of production and consumption. Our prime minister is attempting to facilitate the comforting illusion that half-hearted carbon taxes, non-binding emergency declarations and wishful thinking will reduce global temperatures — but that's not effective climate change policy.

It's climate change denial with a human face. 🙄

2019-06-28

Ecojustice

Climate Change Response to Legal Decision in Ontario

Today we're celebrating another major court victory for the climate and for Canadians.

In a judgement handed down this morning, the Ontario Court of Appeal rejected Premier Doug Ford's attempts to derail nationally-coordinated efforts to combat climate change and confirmed the federal government has the power to defend Canadians from climate breakdown.

Today's victory comes on the heels of an earlier decision from the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, which — in a judicial first — found that “climate change is doubtless an emergency in the sense that it presents a genuine threat to Canada.” Thanks to your support, Ecojustice lawyers intervened in both sets of proceedings.

Ecojustice plans to take these actions with money donations:

- Pressure the federal government to back today's victory with urgent action grounded in strong, enforceable climate laws;
- Stand strong against the likes of Premier Jason Kenney in Alberta, who has set up a \$30 million 'war room' in an effort to silence environmental critics;
- Go to court to defend your right to a safe climate and healthy environment.

Edited.

Other Wildlife News

UN says Canada's plan to rescue Wood Buffalo National Park not enough

Social Sharing

Edmonton: Massive northern park at risk of landing on 'World Heritage in Danger' list

C.B.C. News – Council of Canadians

Bob Weber · The Canadian Press · Posted: Jun 13, 2019 2:32 PM MT | Last Updated: June 13



Wood Buffalo, which straddles the Alberta-Northwest Territories boundary, is one of the world's largest freshwater deltas. (Parks Canada)

The status of Canada's largest park as a world heritage site remains wobbly after a United Nations body expressed grave doubts about a federal plan to rescue it.

"Considerably more effort will be needed to reverse the negative trends at a time when climate change combined with upstream industrial developments and resource extraction are intensifying," says a draft decision on Wood Buffalo National Park from UNESCO, which manages the UN's list of World Heritage Sites.

Further deterioration, it says, "could eventually lead to the inscription of the property on the list of World Heritage in Danger."

Wood Buffalo, which straddles the Alberta-Northwest Territories boundary, is one of the world's largest freshwater deltas and breeding grounds for millions of migratory birds from four continental flyways.

With almost 45,000 square kilometres of grasslands, wetlands and waterways, it is the world's only breeding ground for endangered whooping cranes and home to the world's largest herd of free-ranging wood buffalo. First Nations depend on the area.

But it has been deteriorating for decades. In 2014, the Mikisew Cree asked UNESCO to examine the park and see if it still merited designation as a World Heritage Site.

- **'We're not convinced': Groups criticize draft plan to restore Wood Buffalo National Park**
- **Almost every part of Canada's largest national park deteriorating: federal study**
- **Canada dragging its feet in protecting Wood Buffalo National Park, critics say**

The UNESCO report prompted Ottawa to commission a 561-page study that concluded 15 out of 17 measures of ecological health were declining. The effects — everything from low water flows to curtailed Indigenous use — stem largely from changes to area rivers caused by climate change, dams in British Columbia and industry in Alberta.

Canada proposed solutions such as artificially induced spring floods and other water flows. Ottawa also promised more careful environmental reviews of nearby development and better consultation with local Indigenous people.

Since that report, Alberta has also created a series of wildland areas around most of the park as a buffer zone.

The UN draft decision praises those measures, including the controversial Bill C-69 on environmental assessment.

But Canada failed to answer concerns about B.C. Hydro's Site C dam, UNESCO says. It also points out that ongoing oilsands development upstream from the park is of "serious concern."

The report notes Teck Frontier's oilsands mine would move development closer to the park. It also wants an assessment of the failure risks posed by oilsands tailings ponds.

Parks Canada has committed more than \$27.5 million over five years to support the federal plan. But UNESCO says that's not enough.

'It's a warning'

"More funding will likely be needed given the size of the property and the complexity of the issues," it says.

Kecia Kerr of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society said the UNESCO decision is serious business.

"It's a serious tone and it's a warning," she said. "It's definitely not a real passing grade."

Arresting the park's decline will take strong measures, she said.

"The continuation of adding a small impact here, a small impact there, [has] already overwhelmed the park. It will require some tough decisions and actually saying no to some projects."

There are currently 33 countries with properties on the list of sites in danger. Although the United Kingdom and the United States each have one site on the list, almost all are from Africa, South America and the Middle East.

UNESCO will take its final vote on the draft decision on Canada's response at its next series of meetings starting at the end of the month.

Bee Conservation Science Reporting

European Union expands ban of three neonicotinoid pesticides

By [Erik Stokstad](#) Apr. 27, 2018 , 2:45 PM

The European Union today **expanded** a controversial ban of neonicotinoid pesticides, based on the threat they pose to pollinators. The decision **pleased** environmental groups and was greeted with trepidation by farming associations, which fear economic harm.

In 2013, the European Union placed a moratorium on three kinds of neonicotinoids, forbidding their use in flowering crops that appeal to honey bees and other pollinating insects. The pesticides are commonly coated onto seeds to protect them from soil pests; when the seed germinates, the pesticide is absorbed and spreads through the tissue. It eventually reaches pollen and nectar, which is how pollinators are exposed. Many studies have shown harm to pollinators in laboratory settings; large field trials have produced mixed results.

The European Commission last year proposed extending the ban of three neonicotinoids—clothianidin, imidacloprid, and thiamethoxam—to all field crops, because of growing evidence that the pesticides can harm domesticated honey bees and also wild pollinators. A scientific

review by the European Food Safety Authority, released this February, **added momentum** to the campaign.

After struggling to achieve a majority for several months, the representatives of member states passed the ban today in the commission's Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed. Sixteen countries, including the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, voted in favor. Romania, Denmark, and three other countries opposed the ban, and 13 countries abstained. Neonicotinoids may still be used in permanent greenhouses.

Sugar beet growers **say** there are "no sustainable alternatives" to neonicotinoids and that their removal from market will hurt yields. In addition, seed treatments will be replaced with sprayed pesticides that are more harmful to pollinators, according to a **statement** from the International Confederation of European Beet Growers, in Brussels. And farmers who can't afford to spray may go out of business, it warns.

Several pollinator experts **cautioned** that ban doesn't include systemic pesticides related to neonicotinoids, and that more action is needed to protect pollinators from other threats, including introduced parasites, the loss of diverse flowers to feed on, and destruction of nesting habitat.

Erik Stokstad

Erik is a reporter at *Science*, covering environmental issues and UK research.