

## **Sustainability Education Research On the Move in Canada!**

### **Report of the National Education for Sustainable Development Expert Council Meeting, January 30 – February 1, 2008**

*Jean-Paul L'Italien, Comité de développement durable du Nord-ouest du N.B*

After the recent meeting of the National Education for Sustainable Development Expert Council (NESDEC), I am happy to report that activities are taking shape in various subcommittees, in particular the research sub-committee. It is anticipated that the results of these activities will be made available to practitioners in order to advance sustainability education. New Brunswick representatives at this meeting included Diane Pruneau, Groupe littoral et vie, Raissa Marks, New Brunswick Environmental Network, and me, representing the Comité de développement durable du Nord-ouest du Nouveau-Brunswick.

The NESDEC had a packed agenda. Attendees participated in various activities, one of which was to share the successes that the provincial working groups have had over the past year and the activities that are anticipated for the coming year.

Each NESDEC subcommittee (communication and fundraising, innovation and leadership, research) presented a report of its activities. It was encouraging to hear the interesting and exciting initiatives being undertaken by the subcommittees.

The facilitator asked participants to suggest other activities that NESDEC could take on. Each person posted his or her ideas on a wall; participants had a chance to look at all the ideas on the wall and group them into themes. The results of this exercise were used by the subcommittees to develop next steps. Environment Canada asked all the subcommittees to put a price tag on each activity that they plan on undertaking; these costs will help in writing funding proposals for NESDEC.

We had the pleasure and privilege of listening to author Bob Willard present an approach to integrate the concept of sustainability into corporations and businesses.

I spent much of time at the meeting working with the research subcommittee. During this time, we exchanged ideas on the goal and objectives of our subcommittee. Of note is that the International Institute for Sustainable Development has prepared a questionnaire that has been piloted in Manitoba, with the intention that it will be expanded to the rest of the country. The questionnaire will determine levels of understanding of sustainability and explore sustainable behaviours across the country. We also discussed the establishment of a research journal on sustainability education in Canada.