

## Editorial

The last quarter of 2002 may well be remembered in Canada for the national debate over ratification of the Kyoto Accord. Many, if not most, climatic and environmental experts agree that global warming is a reality and that the scale and frequency of recent, coincidental climatic disasters are some of the results. Sarah Howie, in her article on Burns Bog, argues that restoration of this and other bog ecosystems is essential because bogs are major worldwide providers of ecological services. "Peatlands trap greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane that would otherwise be released during decomposition processes. Of these two gases, methane is the greater threat – its ability to trap longwave radiation and thereby contribute to global warming is 25 times that of carbon dioxide.....Keeping the remainder of the Bog intact would slow the acceleration of such methane emissions."

At least three Canadian provinces (Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia), which contain enormous areas of these ecosystem service providers, are urging the national government not to ratify Kyoto, but to continue emphasis on fossil fuel consumption, at the same time as they are campaigning for fewer enforcement restrictions on resource exploration in areas which include bogs. This lobbying may serve the interests of the fossil fuel industry, but ironically flies in the face of some of the world's best research advice on climate change. The scientific community and the general public are entitled to ask for clarification. Vancouver's atmospheric contamination is a way of life, but ecological protection is weak. Each summer, smog generated in the metropolis is blown eastward into the Fraser Valley and challenges those with respiratory problems. Smog alerts are an annual event for the citizens of Toronto. While economic damage, even disaster, is predicted if Canada does sign the Kyoto Accord, the damage to communal health is rarely factored into the costs. While signing Kyoto is a political decision, failure to make real cuts in greenhouse gases can only harm us all. Protection of steadily shrinking areas of bogs will serve to contain natural greenhouse gas emission, but we cannot expect these and other ecosystems to clean up our pollutants.