

The new environmentalists



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I am an environmentalist. Until recently, I was in the minority. Throughout my life, mainstream society has portrayed environmentalists as a radical fringe group made up of emotional “tree huggers.”

But times are changing. Today, environmentalists come in many different stripes.

Teachers have trained new generations of science-based environmentalists through education programs like Adopt-a-River and Manitoba Envirothon. Last fall, some of these young, science-based environmentalists from St. George School proudly demonstrated university concepts using their dynamic river model. Like David Suzuki, science-based environmentalists are bringing credibility to environmental issues.

Many Indigenous people draw from their



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Young science-based environmentalists from St. George School.

spiritual beliefs and traditional knowledge as culture-based environmentalists. Health-based environmentalists understand that a healthy environment leads to healthy people. Recreation-based environmentalists know that walking, cycling, and paddling in nature is better than any gym.

Art-based environmentalists combine their love of fine art with nature. In 2015 and 2016, Winnipeg audiences had a unique theatrical experience as they paddled by live performers on the banks of the Seine River. Last fall, Dakota Collegiate launched the In-Seine Art project at John Bruce Park. Following an indigenous water ceremony, the students used the Seine River as inspiration

to create earth installations, photography, and other works of art.

A few years ago, I encountered a new type of environmentalist. A local church hosted a public event about the Energy East pipeline. These were not young or radical environmentalists. They were people of faith who recognized that we must be better stewards of the environment. They were deeply concerned about the future.

Save Our Seine is fortunate to have several faith-based environmentalists in its ranks. Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions have had representatives on the board since 2011. Last year, they invited board members to an event at the St. Boniface Cathedral to reflect on Pope Francis' *Laudato Si – on Care for Our Common Home*.

You are invited to meet and mingle with environmentalists of all stripes at Save Our Seine's annual general meeting. The meeting will feature displays from the In-Seine Art project and stream model demonstrations by Grade 7/8 students from St. George School at 7 p.m. on April 16 at Morrow Gospel Church.

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