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Engage!

When the Water's Contaminated

Saving the environment engages community

Residents of Wabamun, a small community west of Edmonton, are dealing with an environmental disaster. An August 3rd C-N train derailment poured thousands of litres of oil and a toxic wood preservative into Lake Wabamun.

Frustrated by a lack of information regarding the health and environmental consequences of the spill and a perceived lack of urgency to clean up the disaster, volunteers have been working to mitigate the damage, trying to save and clean affected wildlife.

Community residents are also coming together to demand answers and action from both the company and the Provincial government. Over 600 people recently attended a public meeting.

As residents of communities like Wabamun and Walkerton know only too well, an environmental disaster or threat often prompts communities to take action to safeguard environmental assets. In the process of working together, communities find strength and a new sense of self.

There are a number of community engagement tools and processes that help communities with environmental restoration efforts. One such manual, produced by Environment Canada, describes a step-by-step process for communities working at environmental projects, from needs assessment to evaluation and includes dozens of clarifying examples to help residents along the way.

 [Download the manual!](#)

Related Links:

- [More on Environmental Restoration](#)
- [Lake Wabamun Watch](#)

By: Louise Kearney

An Indelible Mark

Leadership & movements for change

Social movements are often associated with their well-known figureheads. Civil rights are inextricably linked with Martin Luther King Jr., Indian independence with Mahatma Gandhi, the enshrinement of human rights in Canada with Pierre Trudeau, and the importance of place with Jane Jacobs, to name but a few.

In our continuing investigation into movements for change, the value of leadership continues to emerge as a recurring theme.

A leader can articulate, develop and frame a group's common vision. They can facilitate change by working alongside other movement participants and allowing a collective identity and purpose to take shape. A movement leader inspires and empowers others, and leaves an indelible mark upon the movement.

We recently came across an inspirational social movement developing in communities throughout India. The Mahila Shanti Sena is a movement based on Gandhi's belief that women have a unique capacity for "sacrifice and leadership" in peacebuilding. This women's peace corps, focused on participatory democracy, nonviolence, and women's rights has trained over 50,000 women to resolve a wide range of local and regional conflicts.

It is a testament to the strength of Gandhi's leadership that his vision continues to live and grow in the spirit of this social movement.

 [on Mahila Shanti Sena](#)

Related Links:

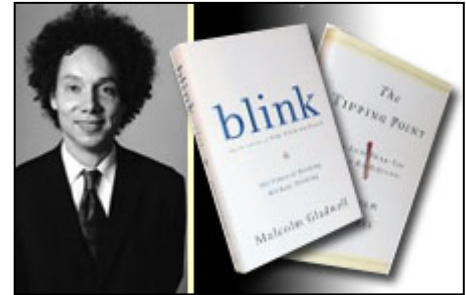
- [Movements for Change](#)
- [A Novel Social Movement in Rural India](#)
- [Women's force for peace](#)

By: Chris Cowperthwaite

Thinking without thinking

Gladwell on blinking & social epidemics.

Every once in awhile someone introduces a new idea that “sparks a change” in the way we think about our work. Malcolm Gladwell’s two best selling books, *The Tipping Point* and *Blink* have sparked that change in the business world.



The *Tipping Point* has proven to be a useful resource on trends in society (Gladwell calls them “social epidemics”) and how they affect business strategies. Several major corporations have the book as required reading for staff and Starbucks’s CEO Howard Shultz attributes his company’s success to *The Tipping Point*.

Gladwell’s most recent book, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* or ‘how we know what we know in social situations’ is this year’s “must-read” bestseller. Focused on rapid cognition, Gladwell discusses the instant conclusions we make in a situation, be it when we meet someone for the first time or read the first sentences of an article. He believes that those instant conclusions are powerful, important, and, on occasion, spot-on.

Gladwell attracts his fair share of controversy. He’s been called both a guru and “a really good translator.” Whatever the case, his books are worth the read if only to spark a change in the way you think about change in your professional and personal life.

 [The Accidental Guru - on Gladwell](#)

Related Links:

- [Gladwell on Human Nature](#)
- [Gladwell bio](#)

By: David Pell

Tamarack Grows

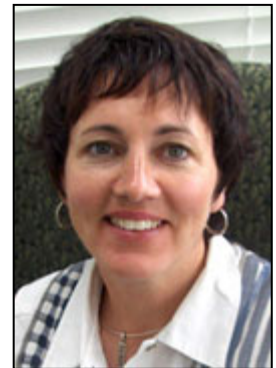
Laura Antal and Sharalynn Krahn join the team!

There's a different vibe in the Tamarack office these days. New team members Laura Antal and Sharalynn Krahn have brought a fresh energy to the work that's contagious!



Laura, our web and multimedia developer, has taken Tamarack's website and e-communications to a whole new level. With a background in Fine Arts and digital media, Laura's focus on the graphic quality of communication extends throughout her life. An artist who sings, plays guitar, writes music, draws, paints, sculpts, and acts, Laura has a real appreciation for the way online communication should look, and, more importantly, how it should feel.

Sharalynn joined the team earlier this summer to provide project support for Tamarack's open and custom services as well as for the Pan Canadian Learning Community within Vibrant Communities.



Sharalynn's always on the go and the variety of work she encounters keeps her on her toes, but she's more than able to juggle it all. She's used to multi-tasking. Outside of Tamarack she plays in a variety of recreational sports leagues, gardens, and spends as much time as she can with her husband and three children.

Laura and Sharalynn's energy, creativity, and abilities have greatly enhanced our team. We are so glad they have chosen to bring their talents and energy to Tamarack!

In other wonderful news, we extend our congratulations to Suzanne Holder and Mark Cabaj and their respective families on their new additions! Suzanne and husband Wayne, welcomed Deacon Conner in late May, while Mark, Leann Wagner and son Isaiah welcomed Zoë Lorraine in June.

 [Meet Tamarack's staff!](#)

By: Louise Kearney