

# Environmental Non-Government Organizations

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Toxics Watch Society  
Synergy Alberta 2010

# Overview

- Introduction / Disclaimer
- 3 Scary Ideas
- Typology
- The Changing Landscape
- Questions/Discussion

# Introduction

- Associate Director of the Toxics Watch Society
  - Toxic Round Ups
  - Air quality policy
  - Regulatory Intervenor
- Edmonton Car Sharing Cooperative
- Alberta Environmental Network
- Multi-stakeholder advisory forums
- Not a sociologist

# By the Numbers

- AEN 85 members
- Other networks of ENGOS
  - FAN, ASN
- Big Green – WWF, Greenpeace, Sierra Club
- About 300 environmentalist groups in AB
  - Many 'informal'
  - Varying in composition and definition

# An ENGO is in the Eye of ...

*There are many lesser movement centralizers.  
...Synergy Alberta is small start-up network of  
ENGOS, local authorities, and industry reps.*

*<http://www.ecofascism.com/article21.html>*

# 3 Scary Ideas

- Nature is unravelling
- Our economy is increasingly disconnected from actual productivity
- Our infrastructure assumes a perpetual supply of cheap fossil fuels

# Nature is Unravelling

- 2010 Year of Biodiversity
  - 30% of Earth's species at risk of extinction
- Disrupting nature we use
- Direct and indirect human causes
  - Habitat destruction
  - 2x, 3x, ?x carbon dioxide concentrations
- 2008 Honolulu Declaration of Ocean Acidification
  - 1st ecosystem collapse marine, not terrestrial

# Growth of Non-productive Economy

- Financialization of the economy
- Productive profit vs speculative profit

*You cannot permanently pit an absurd human convention, such as the spontaneous increment of debt [compound interest] against the natural law of the spontaneous decrement of wealth [entropy].*

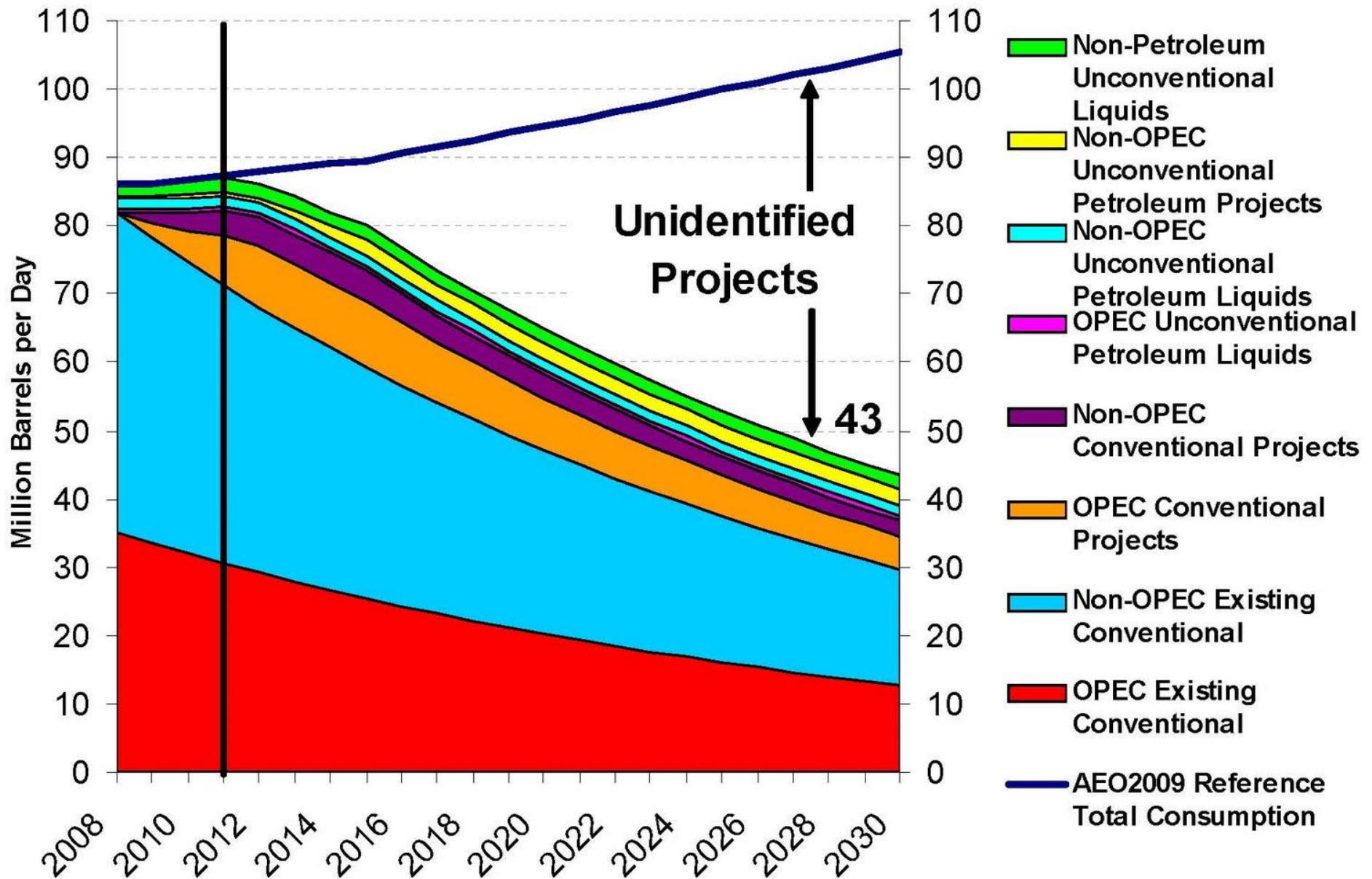
*Frederick Soddy, 1926 Nobel Laureate*



# We need cheap oil!

- Globalization
  - Necessities come from somewhere else
- Suburban/sprawl development patterns

# World's Liquid Fuels Supply



Source: EIA, AEO2009

# ENGO Typology

- Objective
- Primary mode of operating
- Brief history
- Observations

# ENGO Typology

- Policy Wonks
- NIMBYs
- BINGOs
- ?

# Policy Wonk

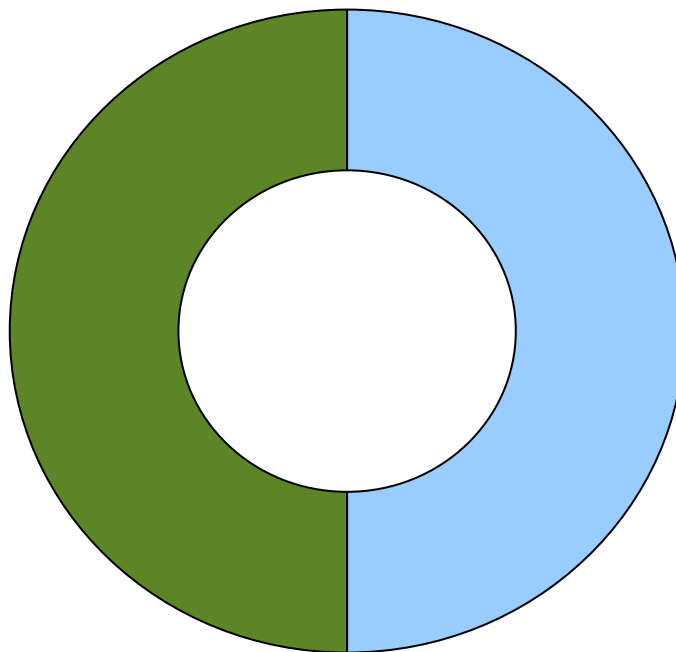
- Objective
  - Incremental improvements in environmental performance
  - *Better business as usual*
- Primary mode of operating
  - Technical policy negotiations

# Policy Wonk

- Brief history
  - Longest history in Alberta / deepest roots
  - Mode driven by:
    - Political stability (PC since '71)
    - institutional response to emerging issues
      - Canada's First Department of Environment
      - Multi-stakeholder fora



Policy  
Negotiating  
ENGOS



Administrative  
Branch of  
Government

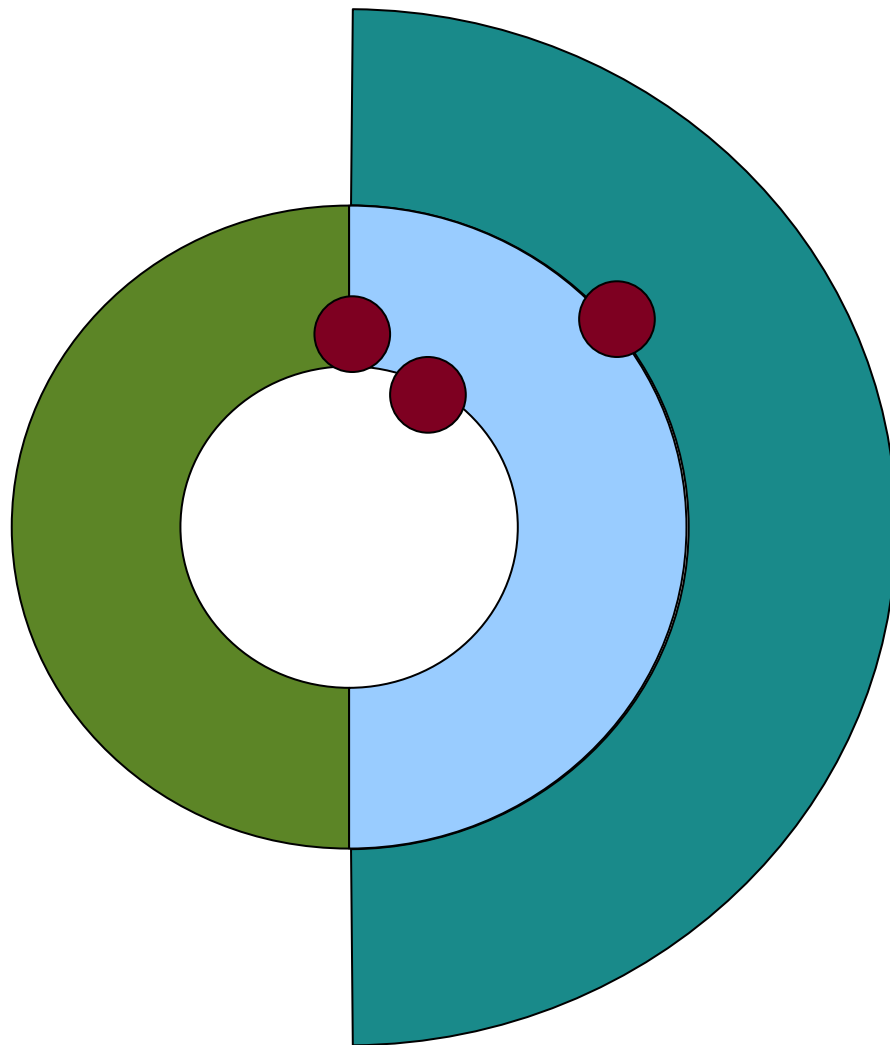
# NIMBYs

- Objective
  - To protect the quality of a specific geographic place
  - *Mind your own business*
- Primary mode of operating
  - Protest
- Brief History
  - Ephemeral organizations, react to specific threats
  - Disband when threat resolves





Policy  
Negotiating  
ENGOS



Legislative  
Branch of  
Government

# BINGOs

- Objective
  - Social change (attitudes of large populations)
  - *Change the whole business*
- Primary mode of operating
  - campaigns





HARPER/IGNATIETTI

CLIMATE INACTION  
COSTS LIVES

GREENPEACE

# ALBERTA: THE OTHER OIL DISASTER



Thinking of visiting  
Alberta, Canada?  
Think again.

[RETHINKALBERTA.com](http://RETHINKALBERTA.com)

Gulf Oil Spill Disaster

Alberta Tar Sands Oil Disaster

*Alberta*

Paid for by  
Corporate Ethics International

CLEARCHANNEL

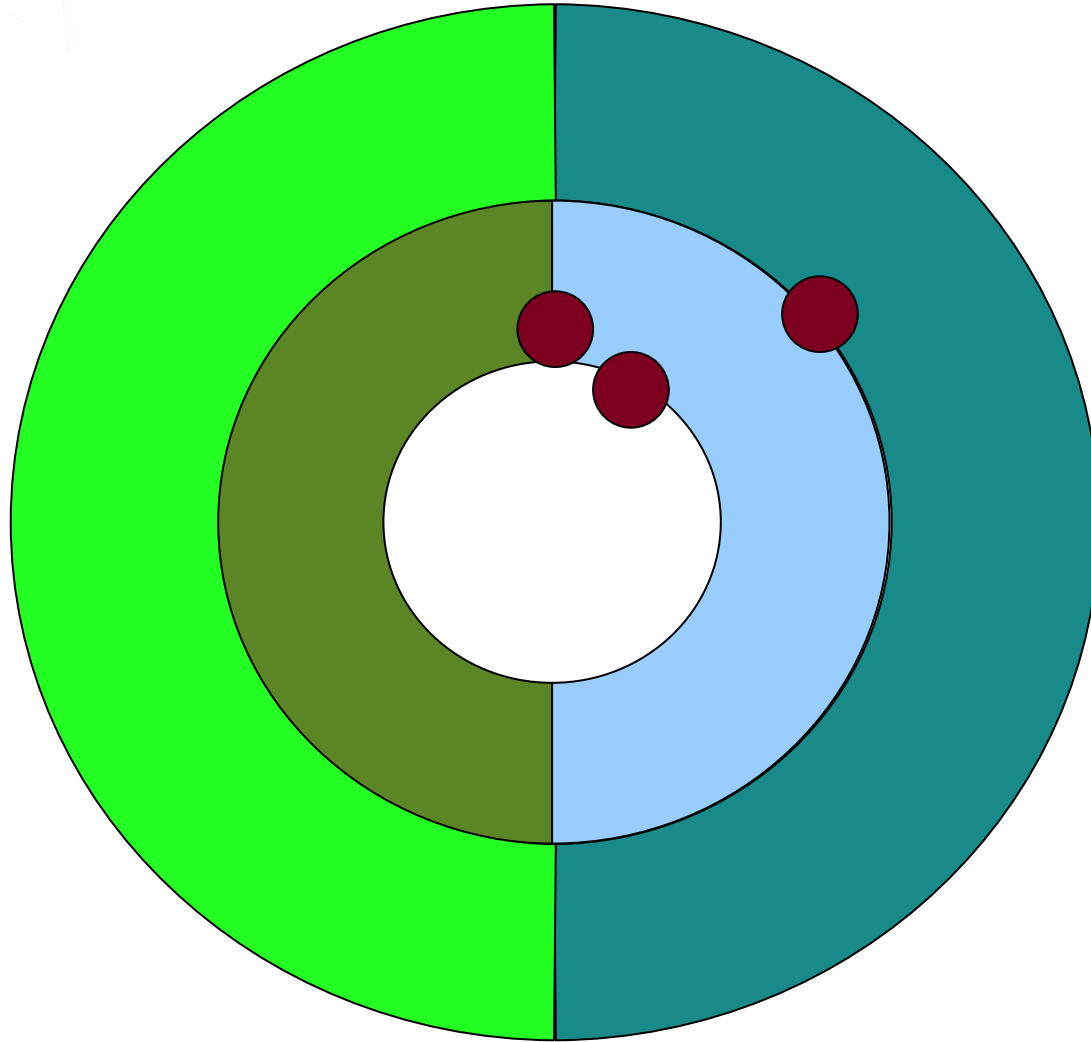
092466

Stacy and Wilbeck, Inc.

GENERAL BUILDING CONTRACTORS



Big  
International  
NGOs



Legislative  
Branch of  
Government

# The Changing Landscape

*The work of environmentalists is to slow, a little bit, worlds inexorable slide to the end in the hope that in the extra time humanity might make the dramatic, unexpected changes to save it all.*

Ralph Nader, Edmonton, 1995

# Transition Town Movement

- A world-wide network of communities
- Responding to the 3 big fears
- On the ground initiatives
  - Renewable energy/energy conservation
  - Food security
  - Community structural and economic development







# Green Edmonton

How To Live Green. Here.

Home

## Mill Creek NetZero Home

### Table Of Contents

Posted November 25th, 2008 by Conrad

[Mill Creek NetZero Home](#)



The Mill Creek NetZero Home (MCNZH) is a landmark cold-climate home. Situated in Canada's northernmost major city, Edmonton, Alberta, it will produce as much or more energy than it consumes over the course of a year. Furthermore, it aims to be Western Canada's first LEED-Platinum certified residential building.

The MCNZH is located at 9805 - 84th Avenue, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Construction began on July 30th, 2008.

The co-owner of the home, Conrad Nobert, is blogging about the many green features of the home. This is a table of contents of his blog entries. You can navigate using the table, or scroll down to view the posts in reverse chronological



# Transition Town Movement

*What we are convinced of is this:*

- *If we wait for the governments, it'll be too little, too late*
- *If we act as individuals, it'll be too little*
- *But if we act as communities, it might be just enough, just in time.*

# Transition Town Movement

- The environmental movement turned inside-out
  - Addresses the 3 big fears by putting people first
  - Not about saving some outside 'environment'
  - Don't call them 'environmentalists'

# Questions

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