

**Access to Environmental Justice:
A Manitoba Toolkit for Improving Public
Participation**

**Final Project Report
February 2021**

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Introduction

This final report details the implementation of the Manitoba Law Foundation funded project: *Access to Environmental Justice: A Manitoba Toolkit for Improving Public Participation*. The project materialized as a 6-part public legal education webinar series, delivered over the 2020/2021 academic year. The goal of the series is to increase Manitobans' awareness of and participation in the decision-making processes that impact the environment in Manitoba and Canada. Titled *Navigating the Law to Protect the Environment*, the webinar series is housed on the Manitoba Eco-Network website, and includes complementary written documentation (background fact sheet, additional resources, discussion questions, and links to the Manitoba secondary school curriculum) for each topic.

The response from webinar participants is overwhelmingly positive and demonstrative of the need and desire for additional public legal education resources designed for and by Manitobans, particularly in the area of environmental law.

Project Inspiration

The concept of “environmental justice” originates in the southern United States (circa 1980s) as a result of community efforts to address the dumping of toxic waste in areas where the majority of the population was low-income and black.¹ Thus environmental justice is closely tied to the concept of “environmental racism”.² Although there is no consensus on the definition of “access to justice” in an environmental context, American definitions such the one below used by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are highly influential in academic discourse.

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- *the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and*
- *equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.*³

Environmental justice generally refers to “those cultural norms and values, rules, regulations, behaviours, policies, and decisions to support sustainable communities, where people can interact with confidence that their environment is safe, nurturing, and productive.”⁴ There are many suggested approaches to supporting environmental justice such as:

- decent paying and safe jobs;
- quality schools and recreation;
- decent housing and adequate health care;

¹ Andil Gosine and Cheryl Teelucksingh, *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada: An Introduction* (Emond Montgomery Publications Ltd: Toronto, Canada, 2008), 2.

² Gosine and Teelucksingh, *ibid*, 11.

³ United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Environmental Justice*, online: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

⁴ Bunyan Bryant, eds, *Environmental Justice/ Issues, Policies, and Solutions* (Island Press: Washington, D.C., 1995), *ibid*, 6.

- democratic decision-making and personal empowerment; and
- communities free of violence, drugs, and poverty.⁵

Environmental justice is also considered to be a community building concept that “connects a range of social movements, including anti-racism movements, Aboriginal rights and sovereignty movements, labour union movements, and the mainstream environmental movement.”⁶ This is because an environmental justice approach “addresses a wide range of social and environmental problems and seeks to eliminate harmful practices in housing, land use, industrial planning, and health care.”⁷

Although American experiences are important to consider in the development of access to environmental justice approaches in Canada, it is important to recognize that each jurisdiction faces its own unique challenges. In Manitoba, for example, the communities seeking access to environmental justice face specific local issues such as heavy metal soil contamination in a low-income community in Winnipeg⁸, species at risk on the western border⁹ and threatened watersheds in the south¹⁰. Indigenous communities in Manitoba also face significant challenges in accessing environmental justice as many such communities are forced to bear much of the negative environmental consequences of natural resource developments, like the generation of hydroelectric power, with few direct benefits.

Expected outcomes and measuring success

The expected outcomes of this project are:

- The development of environmental law resources and tools written in plain language and made available to the public.
- Delivery of workshops on environmental legal processes in Manitoba, improving awareness and understanding of environmental law issues among students and the general public.
- Increased capacity on the part of MbEN and PILC to provide public education on environmental law and policy processes.
- Increased connections and co-operation between environmental NGOs, legal practitioners, academics and students in relation to environmental legal and policy issues.
- Improved opportunity for university students at the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg to participate in and facilitate public environmental education initiatives.

⁵ Bryant, *ibid*, 6.

⁶ Gosine and Teelucksingh, *supra* note 1, 11.

⁷ Gosine and Teelucksingh, *ibid*.

⁸ Kristin Annable, “Heavy metal soil contamination found at 24 homes in St. Boniface” (July 17, 2018) online: <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/st-boniface-gardens-heavy-metal-contamination-1.4750141>>

⁹ Ian Froese, “Manitoba’s Premier Pallister pitches prime minister on ‘green pipeline’ for hydro exports” (December 7, 2018) online: <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/brian-pallister-sell-hydroelectricity-green-pipeline-1.4937411>>

¹⁰ Chelsea Kemp, “Yellowhead Hog Barn cleared by council” (November 8, 2018) <<https://www.brandonsun.com/local/yellowhead-hog-barn-cleared-by-council-499993981.html>>; Chelsea Kemp, “Watchdog group cries hogwash” (September 26, 2018) online: <<https://www.brandonsun.com/local/watchdog-group-cries-hogwash-494330791.html>>

The success of this project is measured by the quality of the education initiatives developed, the number of Manitobans reached through our environmental law programs and the extent to which the project achieves its expected outcomes. The success of this project is measured based on the feedback received, through surveys, from participants of project workshops and the users of the plain language publications produced.

[Navigating the Law to Protect the Environment: A Lecture Series](#)

This free, six-part public legal education webinar series makes expert insights and tools available to the public to improve Manitobans' understandings of environmental law. The series aims to foster increased public participation in environmental legal processes and reforms.

Each of the six webinars are approximately one-hour in length, and feature two or three speakers per topic. This allows for a dynamic and engaging discussion that provides meaningful information to the intended audience, while not running at a that deters audience interest. The webinar format also allows for a broad target audience and wider reach for the project.

Delivering the project through digital platforms presents an opportunity to improve accessibility of the project for members of the public. While the project is primarily targeted at Manitobans, the content created is now also freely available to anyone with expressed interest in the topics covered, regardless of where they live. The content covered is also not exclusively relevant for Manitobans, and could be useful for any Canadian who is interested in deepening their knowledge of environmental legal themes and processes, and how to get involved themselves.

The digital delivery of the project also presents an opportunity to attract experts in environmental law from across Canada to share their insights with Manitobans. Where possible, speaker panels include at least one Manitoban to provide local context for the issue. Speaker panels also include one lawyer and one expert non-lawyer with lived or professional experience of the webinar's topic where possible. This allows for a balance to be struck between keeping the series accessible for a broad audience, while also providing useful technical information to Manitoba lawyers.

In choosing the speakers for the series, consideration includes gender parity and representing racial diversity. Identity markers are influential in the manner that each of the webinar topics are experienced, our organizing team aimed to be responsive to this reality and equitable in the speaker selection process.

[Webinars \(in chronological order\)](#)

1. [Environmental Racism and the Law](#): September 10, 2020

Environmental racism occurs when a law, policy or practice differently affects or disadvantages individuals, groups or communities based on race or colour, often resulting in a lowered quality of life for those persons. This webinar explores the topic of environmental racism and identifies how it manifests in the Canadian and Manitoban contexts. Speakers are Dr. Bruce McIvor and Chief Heidi Cook.

Chief Cook is from Grand Rapids, Manitoba and is a member of the Misipawistik Cree Nation. Her interests include the protection of lands and waters, understanding and

strengthening Treaty relationships, cultural teachings and ceremonies, and living a good life. She holds a BA in Environmental Sustainability and Politics and a Masters Certificate in Project Management from UWinnipeg, and a Masters in Development Practice (MDP) in Indigenous Development from the University of Winnipeg.

Heidi served for 6 years as a Councillor for Misipawastik Cree Nation and most recently, in July of 2020, she was elected Chief of Misipawistik. Prior to her time as an elected official, Heidi worked with the Misipawastik Cree Nation Traditional Lands and Waters in areas of land use, planning and management.

She continues her work with Indigenous communities in Manitoba to achieve development that is just, improves opportunities for health and employment, and ensures lands, waters and rights are protected.

Dr. McIvor is principal of First Peoples Law Corporation, a law firm dedicated to defending and advancing Aboriginal title, Aboriginal rights and Treaty rights. His work includes both litigation and negotiation on behalf of Indigenous Peoples across Canada. Bruce is dedicated to public education. He recently published the third edition of his collection of essays entitled *First Peoples Law: Essays in Canadian Law and Decolonization*. He is also an Adjunct Professor at the University of British Columbia's Allard School of Law where he teaches the constitutional law of Aboriginal and Treaty rights. Bruce is a proud Métis from the Red River in Manitoba. He holds a law degree, a Ph.D. in Aboriginal and environmental history and is a Fulbright Scholar. Bruce, a member of the bar in British Columbia and Ontario, is recognized nationally and internationally as a leading practitioner of Aboriginal law in Canada.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xplzlcKWYE>

2. Accessing Legislative Change: October 8, 2020

Environmental law is created by legislators through the legislative process. This process is open to public input and, as a result, citizen engagement in the legislative process is an important part of pushing for change on environmental matters. In this webinar, three seasoned advocates discuss their tools for engaging and the truths they've uncovered about the process of advocating for legislative change. Speakers are Hugh Benevides and Justyna Laurie-Lean & Glen Koroluk

Hugh Benevides has been called to the Bar in Ontario and Nova Scotia and has worked for a Member of Parliament and committee chair on Parliament Hill, as the Canadian legal officer at an international organization, and for many of Canada's leading environmental law, environmental and conservation organizations. In 2004-06 he led a campaign for the Canadian Environmental Law Association in relation to the federal "smart regulation" program and served on an advisory committee (the Reference Group on Regulating) to Privy Council Office in 2005-06. Since 2016 he has advised groups on government and parliamentary relations, particularly on Bills C-68 and C-69 that became law during the final days of the 42nd Parliament.

Justyna Laurie-Lean works with Mining Association of Canada (MAC) members in addressing and understanding the federal regulatory and legislative environment that Canadian mining companies adhere to. In her role, she monitors emerging regulatory issues and participates in policy development for a wide range of federal acts and regulations. Prior to joining MAC in 1991, Justyna worked in various mining operations in Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia, followed by a posting with the federal government. A pioneer in the industry, Justyna was one of the first female mining engineers in Canada, having completed a degree in Mining Engineering from McGill University in 1978.

Glen Koroluk has spent most of his working career in the non-profit and charitable sector as a community organizer and coordinator on issues and projects such as housing, food sovereignty, community development and environmental protection. He is currently the executive director of the Manitoba Eco-Network and volunteers as a board member with the National Farmers Foundation, Canadian Environmental Network and his local community club, Valour CC. He holds a BSc. from the University of Winnipeg that focused on geography and statistics.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpGWJBExys8>

3. Are Class Actions the Way to Go?: November 12, 2020

Class action lawsuits present an opportunity for many individuals to join forces in taking on typically bigger and more powerful entities. This tool is being increasingly used in the environmental context to protect individual and collective rights to a clean and healthy environment. This webinar focuses on these developments in the legal world, and answers the question of what promise Class actions might hold for furthering environmental justice. Speakers are Professor Jasminka Kalajdzic and Catherine Gauthier.

Professor Kalajdzic is an associate professor at Windsor Law where she teaches courses on legal ethics, evidence, and class actions. Professor Kalajdzic is widely published, including *Class Actions in Canada: The Promise and Reality of Access to Justice* (2018) and *The Law of Class Actions in Canada* (co-authored, 2015). Professor Kalajdzic was the co-principal researcher and co-author of the Law Commission of Ontario's *Class Action Report* (2019). She speaks regularly about class actions at scholarly and judicial conferences in Canada, the United States, and Europe. She served two terms as a member of the Law Foundation of Ontario's Class Proceedings Committee, and is the Canadian representative in an International Research Collaborative on Collective Litigation. She co-teaches a comparative class action seminar with colleagues at Stanford, Tilburg and Leuphana Universities. She is the founder and clinic director of the Class Action Clinic, the first clinic in the world to focus on the needs and interests of class members.

Catherine Gauthier is the executive director of ENvironnement JEUnesse (ENJEU), a Quebec environmental organization focused on educating and equipping Quebec's youth to take action on environmental issues. Catherine holds a Masters in international law and politics, specializing in international climate negotiations, environmental issues, education, and human rights. She has been invited to speak to the United Nations General

Assembly, at the 11th conference of the parties for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and, on behalf of ENJEU, has participated in ten UN conferences of the parties on climate change since 2007. In 2018, Catherine and ENJEU launched a class action lawsuit against the federal government of Canada for its inaction regarding the climate change crisis, this action is presently moving through the courts. Catherine continues to be involved with groups working on issues related to climate change, just and equitable economic transitions, and intergenerational equity.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPfAJgO8s0k>

4. Feet on the Ground: Your Rights when you Protest: February 11, 2021

People living in Canada have often opted to voice their opinions and advocate for change on environmental issues through direct action and protest work. Our ability to express ourselves in these ways is rooted in the freedoms of expression and assembly which are guaranteed by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. However, government has acted to limit the exercise of these rights in different ways, and participating in protest actions can expose a participant to liabilities. This webinar explores the legal framework around protesters rights and how the legal system and protest interact. Speakers are Cara Zwibel and Emilie Theresa Smith.

Cara Zwibel is a lawyer and director of the fundamental freedoms program at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. Cara was called to the Ontario bar in 2005. She has a political science degree from McGill University and law degrees from Osgoode Hall Law School (LL.B.) and New York University (LL.M.). Her work with CCLA involves providing legal opinions and research, coordinating litigation and interventions, representing CCLA before the courts, preparing submissions to legislative bodies and assisting with public education work.

Emilie Teresa Smith was born on the land of the Henia peoples in Argentina, grew up in Canada, and currently resides on the territory of the Coast Salish peoples. She has spent much of her life in Guatemala, especially in the highland communities of the K'iche peoples. She is an Anglican priest, writer and community activist. She is the co-president of the International Oscar Romero Solidarity Organization (SICSAL), a network of liberation theology practicing Christians around the world, particularly focused on transforming injustice in Abya Yala (Latin America).

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTxp4oNOW4E>

5. Amplifying voices: Getting involved in environmental decisions: March 11, 2021

Throughout Canada, decision-making on environmentally impactful project proposals is subject to regulatory processes through which members of the public are invited to voice their concerns or support for a given proposal. Depending on the process, becoming involved can be a significant and daunting undertaking. In this webinar, speakers Anna Johnston and Gloria Desorcy share their expertise on the challenges and opportunities that are presented by involving oneself in environmental regulatory processes.

Anna Johnston, BA, LLB, is a staff lawyer at West Coast Environmental Law, where she works on environmental impact assessment, cumulative effects and climate law. She also co-chairs the Environmental Planning and Assessment Caucus of the Canadian Environmental Network, and is a member of the Minister's Advisory Council appointed to advise the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change in implementing the *Impact Assessment Act*. Anna is currently working towards a Master of Laws from Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law, where she is writing on federal jurisdiction over next generation environmental assessment.

Gloria Desorcay is the executive director of the Consumers Association of Canada, Manitoba Branch. In this capacity, and also in her capacity as an engaged citizen, Gloria has a long history of successful involvement in Manitoba's regulatory decision-making processes.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhUGMc00Sy4>

6. Reconciliation and Environmental Law: April 15, 2021

The theme of reconciliation is significant in Canada's current legal, cultural and political moment. In the legal world, the meaning and implications of this theme have been hotly debated, and debate has extended to the practice of environmental law. In this webinar, invited speakers discuss what reconciliation means in the context of environmental law, and what path needs to be tread in order to work towards it. Speakers are Aimee Craft and Merrell-Ann Phare.

Aimee Craft is an award-winning teacher and researcher, recognized internationally as a leader in the area of Indigenous laws, treaties and water. She prioritizes Indigenous-lead and interdisciplinary research, including through visual arts and film, co-leads a series of major research grants on Decolonizing Water Governance and works with many Indigenous nations and communities on Indigenous relationships with and responsibilities to *nibi* (water). She plays an active role in international collaborations relating to transformative memory in colonial contexts and relating to the reclamation of Indigenous birthing practices as expressions of territorial sovereignty.

Prof. Craft is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Common law, University of Ottawa and an Indigenous (Anishinaabe-Métis) lawyer from Treaty 1 territory in Manitoba. She is the former Director of Research at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the founding Director of Research at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. She practiced at the Public Interest Law Centre for over a decade and in 2016 she was voted one of the top 25 most influential lawyers in Canada. In 2021 she was awarded the prestigious Canadian Bar Association President's Award.

Breathing Life Into the Stone Fort Treaty, her award-winning book, focuses on understanding and interpreting treaties from an Anishinaabe *inaakonigewin* (legal) perspective. She is past chair of the Aboriginal Law Section of the Canadian Bar

Association and a current member of the Speaker's Bureau of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba.

Merrell-Ann Phare is a lawyer, author and the founding Executive Director of the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, a national First Nation charitable environmental organisation. Merrell-Ann is a Commissioner of the International Joint Commission and co-convenor of the Collaborative Leadership Initiative in Manitoba. She was Chief Negotiator on behalf of the Government of the NWT in their negotiation of transboundary water agreements in the Mackenzie River Basin and for the creation of Thaidene Nene, a national and territorial park in the east arm of Great Slave Lake. She is a member of Smart Prosperity, the Forum for Leadership on Water and is a recipient of the Clean 50 Award. She is legal counsel and advisor to a number of First Nation governments and regularly speaks on governance, water, and rights issues.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9kvMXFyuM0>

Support Documents

To provide further information and resource suggestions for those viewing the *Navigating the Law* webinars, a series of supporting documents has been developed for each topic covered.

Background Information: Background information documents were prepared following a basic Who, What, When, Where, Why format that was adjusted depending on the subject matter of the associated webinar. These documents include the definition of major legal terms, relevant examples with a focus on Manitoba experiences, and suggestions for further engagement.

Additional Resources: A broad range of resources from relevant academic, government and environmental organizations are included in the additional resources document. To ensure accessibility there was a focus on identifying online resources in both print and video format.

Discussion Questions: To facilitate classroom discussions about the webinar subject matter, basic discussion questions were identified and sample answers were provided.

Additional Questions: The additional questions documents provide direct linkages to Manitoba high school curriculum materials and replicate relevant questions pulled from available curriculum documents.

Project Glossary: In response to feedback from members of the public, a project glossary has been developed to provide further information about basic legal terms that may not be broadly understood by the public. Students from the Environmental Law Group at Robson Hall, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba put together the foundational research for this document.

To ensure the information was communicated in a plain language format and would be valuable to educators who want to incorporate the webinars and supporting documents into their class materials, a retired teacher with over 30 years of experience in Manitoba, Mary-Ann Fast, was

brought in to contribute to the development of the supporting materials. Mrs. Fast's input was particularly valuable in helping identify linkages between the subject matter of the webinars and existing Manitoba high school curriculum materials available from Manitoba Education.

The project team also employed a translation company to make the Background Information and Discussion Questions documents available in French. Numerous attempts were made to secure Indigenous language translation services (Cree, Ojibway) so additional translations of the support documents could be made available. However, due to the pandemic related shutdowns many organizations experienced in the past year, no such services were found to be available within the timeline of the lecture series.

All supporting documents are publicly available and will be hosted online by The Manitoba Eco-Network: <https://mbeconetwork.org/projects/navigating-the-law-to-protect-the-environment/>

Community Response

Participation Data

Data on participation for each of the webinars is as follows.

1. Environmental Racism and the Law
 - a. Event held September 10, 2020
 - b. Event Registration: 188
 - c. Live participants: 97
 - d. YouTube video views: 332 (as of 20 Sept 2021)
2. Accessing Legislative Change
 - a. Event held October 8, 2020
 - b. Registration: 114
 - c. Live participants: 68
 - d. YouTube video views: 154 (as of 20 Sept 2021)
3. Are Class Actions the way to go?
 - a. Event held November 12, 2020
 - b. Registration: 122
 - c. Live participants: 59
 - d. YouTube video views: 49 (as of 20 Sept 2021)
4. Feet on the Ground: Your rights when you protest
 - a. Event held February 11, 2021
 - b. Registration: 64
 - c. Live participants: 35
 - d. YouTube video views: 17 (as of 20 Sept 2021)
5. Amplifying Voices: Getting involved in environmental decisions
 - a. Event held March 11, 2021
 - b. Registration: 52

- c. Live participants: 39
 - d. YouTube video views: 13 (as of 20 Sept 2021)
6. Reconciliation and Environmental Law
- a. Event held April 15, 2021
 - b. Registration: 60
 - c. Live participants: 41
 - d. YouTube video views: 35 (as of 20 Sept 2021)

Webinar Exit-Surveys

The organizational team originally intended to offer a survey after each presentation; unfortunately, as a result of technical difficulties, only the first two are complete.¹¹ Surveys included questions:

- specific to each webinar;
- about the format of the series;
- regarding the relative interest of participant to continue to engage; and,
- seeking input into the subsequent webinars.

Given the sample size, we chose not to include the responses specific to each webinar. However, two sets of data are important. First, responses to the survey provided information on topics for the winter series. The final three webinar topics: Your rights when you protest; Getting involved in environmental decisions; and Reconciliation and environmental law reflect audience feedback from the first two surveys.

Second, the initial surveys provide important information on the webinar format. With respect to the format of the series, the majority of respondents are satisfied with the pace and duration (see Figure 1). Supplemental feedback in the survey suggested more time for the question and answer period (2 respondents). As a consequence, we eliminated the period at the end of the webinar when we introduced the speakers for the next session.

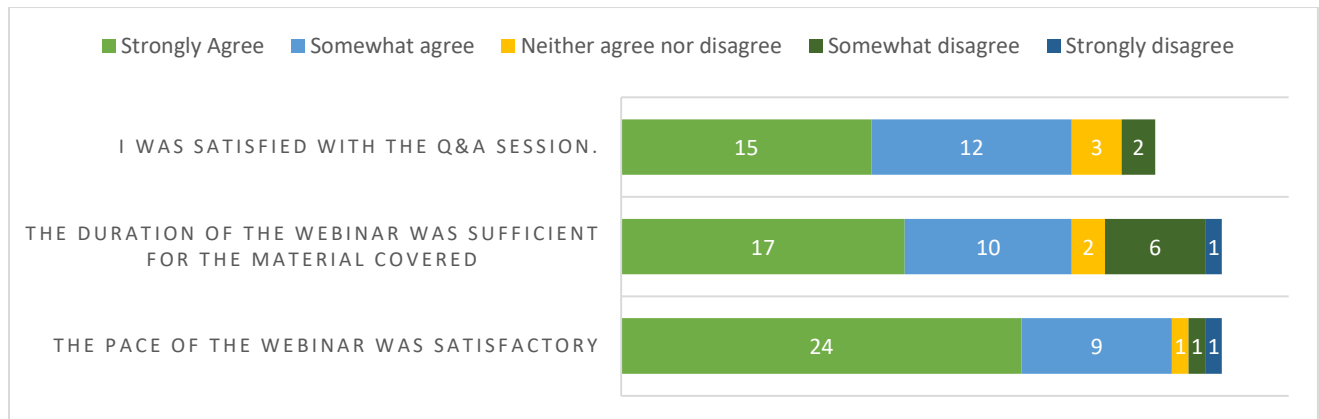


Figure 1: Feedback related to the format of the webinar series.

¹¹ The first survey had 26 respondents; the second survey had 7.

Series Conclusion Survey

Following the last webinar, we distributed a survey to all registered users (open June 17- July 4, 2021). The link to the survey was distributed via email.

The survey includes twelve questions, grouped into five categories:

- Information about how you participated;
- Questions about the webinars;
- Questions about the supplementary resources;
- Comments about what you think we should do next; and,
- Final comments.

We received 16 responses in total.

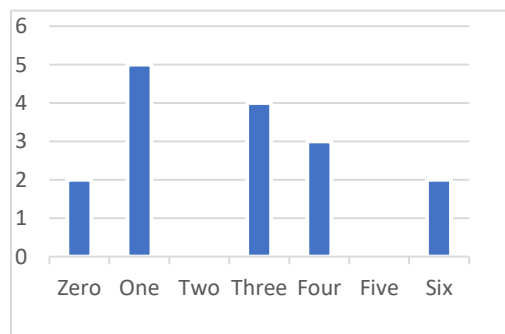


Figure 2: Response to question: "How many webinars did you watch?"

Figure 2 illustrates the number of webinars viewed by each respondent. Interestingly, nine participants were "repeat" participants, meaning they viewed more than one webinar.

We thought it important to identify what prevented them from watching a webinar. The results were unremarkable, with one response related to forgetting, one related to being too busy, one related to zoom fatigue and one related to computer issues. Two people noted they planned to watch the video(s) in the future.

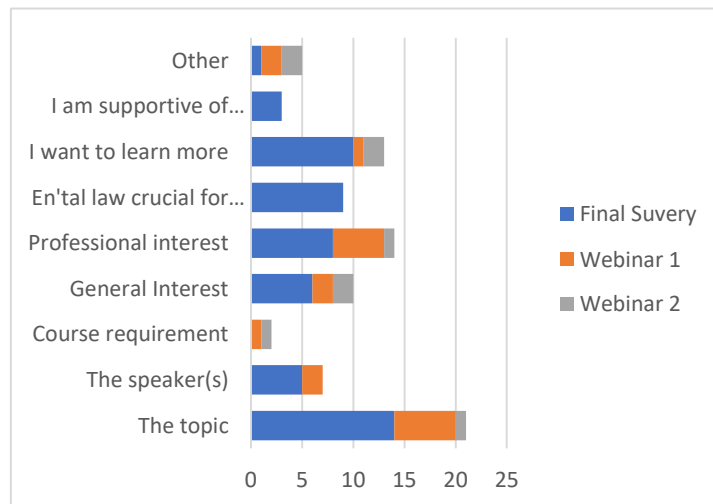
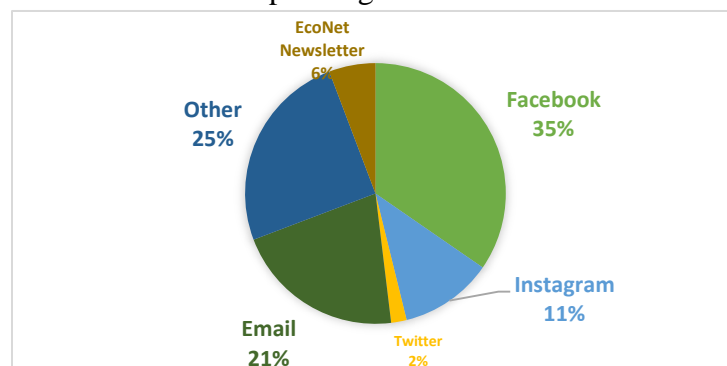


Figure 3: Responses related to why participants choose to watch the webinar. Multiple responses permitted. The list of options for the exit survey are generated from the webinar responses. The latter are coded based on an open question.

The audience members are self-selected, based on a variety of professional and personal factors. The most significant factor appears to be the webinar topic, followed by professional interest, a desire to learn, and general interest. This results suggest that we were successful in reaching different audiences, including professionals and the general public. The earlier respondents included, quite clearly, were students. However, the timing of the final survey may have

negatively impacted this type of audience from responding.

With respect to publicity, Figure 4 illustrates that all forms of electronic media were valuable, including



Facebook, direct emails and Instagram. Those responding to the final heard about the webinar series from the Manitoba EcoNetwork and other ENGOS (13), followed by the University of Winnipeg and other Universities (5), and the Public Interest Law Centre (1).

With respect to technological components, participants found:

- the email reminder useful (13 Strongly Agree; 1 Agree)
- registration was straight forward (12 Strongly Agree; 2 Agree); and
- Zoom was easy to use (12 Strongly Agree; 1 Agree; 1 somewhat disagree).

There is some division, however on if an on-line webinar is preferable to an in-person seminar. While eight responses preferred an on-line webinar, two disagreed (four neither agreed nor disagreed). This suggests that, moving forward, we should, at a minimum, include an on-line audience to make the material widely available. Figure 5 illustrates responses to other design elements, including audience perspectives on interactive components, simultaneous translation and live ASL interpretation.

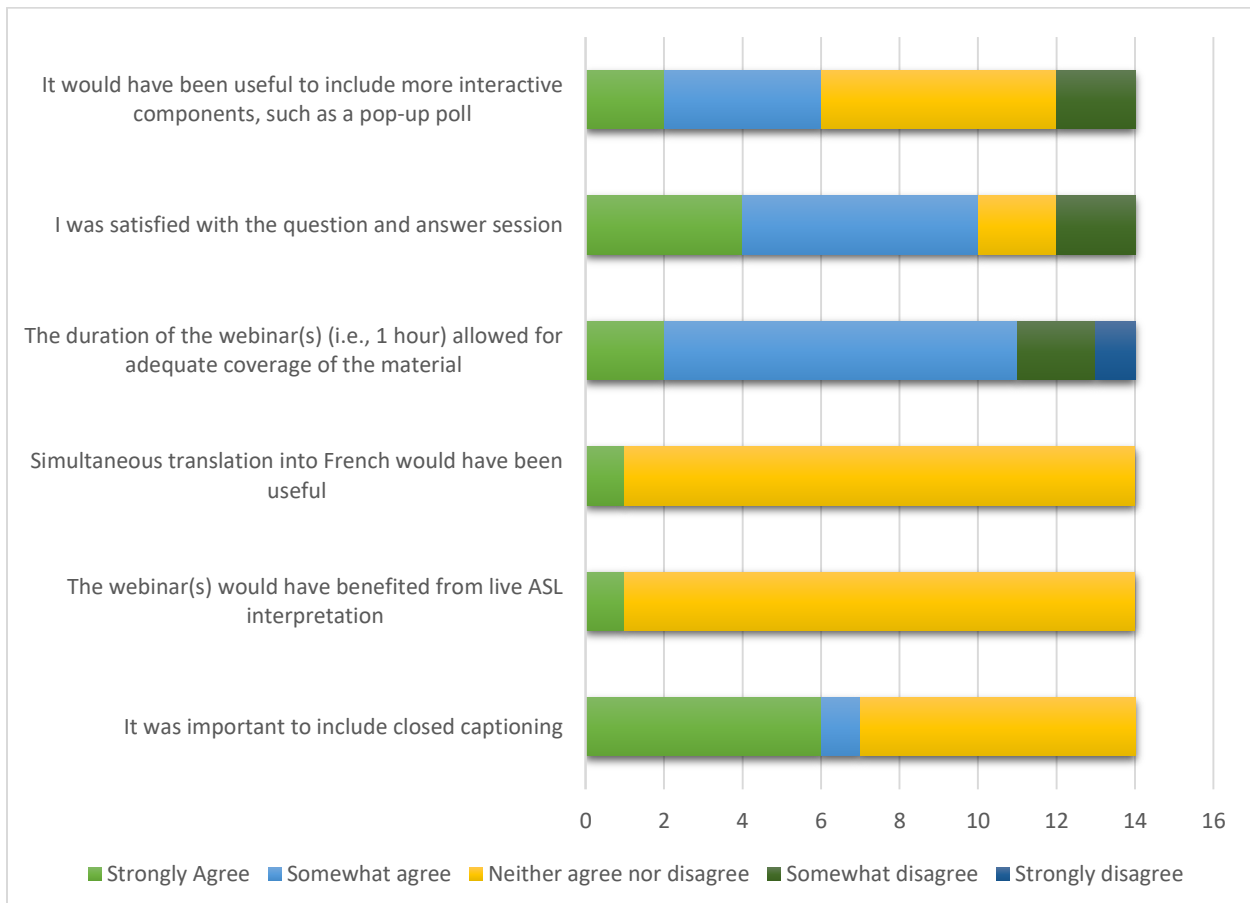


Figure 5: Responses to questions reflecting on the design components of the webinar.

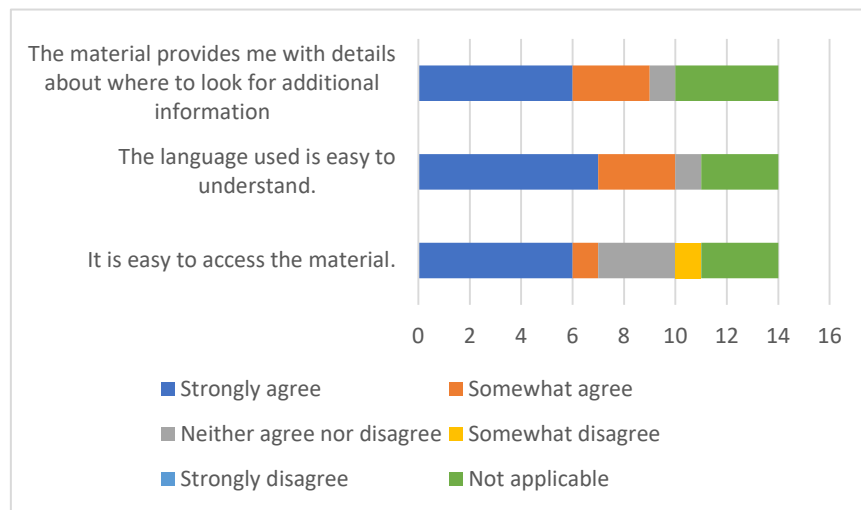
As with the two original surveys, some participants found that the duration of the Question and Answer portion to be too short (reflected in the data in Figure 5, followed up with additional

information in the open-ended portion). However, the small number of dissatisfied answers suggest our modifications throughout the series were useful.

We also identified a missed opportunity to include more interaction, such as a pop-up poll, which half of the respondent agreed with. This was something we were not familiar with at the start of the series; should we use this web-format again, it would be important to explore different mechanisms for engaging the audience.

Only two of the participants had an opportunity to review the supplementary material by the deadline for the survey. Most respondents (10) planned to access them in the future. People planned to use the material:

- By sharing with classroom (2)



- As a starting point for research (7)
- For conversation with friends or family (6)
- Other (4)
- Do not plan to use (2)

The other all related to professional activities, such as sharing in the workplace, completing power points and implementing them in life and work. Importantly,

most found that this material meet its objectives – specifically it is accessible, easy to understand, and provides additional information for the audience (see figure 6).

Figure 6: Feedback related to the supplementary material.

Figure 7 provides audience responses to questions

surrounding the overall webinar series. The community engagement with this webinar series, and the positive feedback received through survey responses demonstrates that there is both need and demand for publicly accessible information on environmental law from trustworthy sources. Although not meant as illustrative of all audience members, we are particularly proud of the final remarks (exhaustive list, as only two surveys provided final remarks):

- I hope that this happens again - about the right number - could maybe do 4 rather than 6 - 2 in fall 2 in winter. Congrats to all of those that out this together!
- Excellent webinar series.

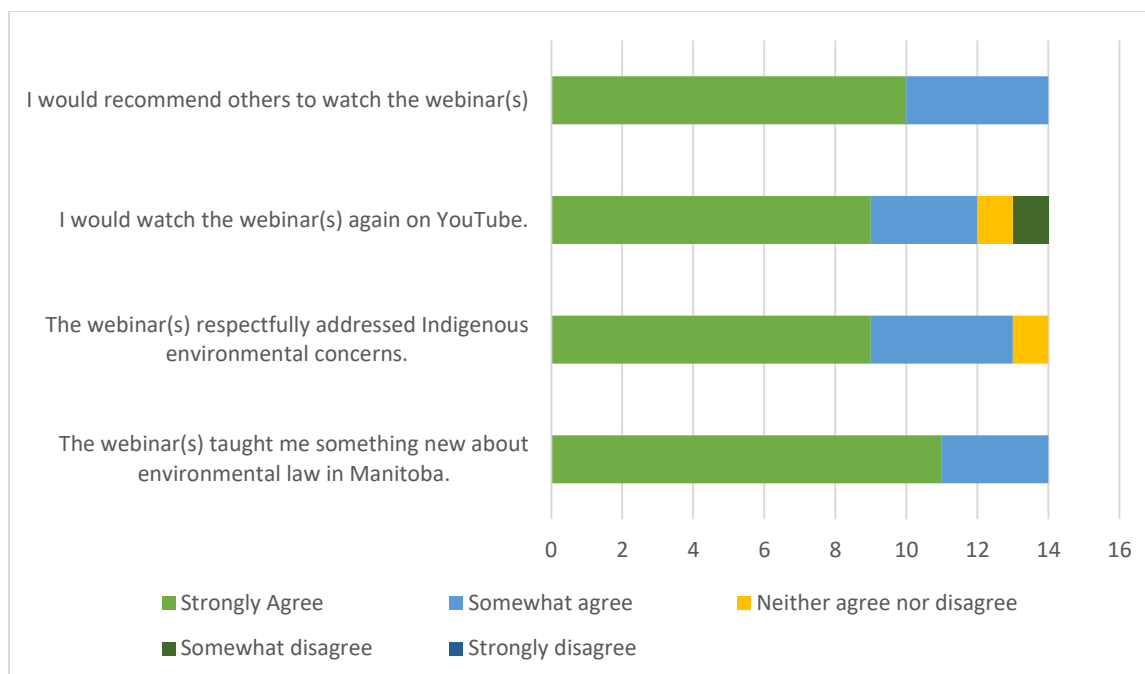


Figure 7: Responses to statements about the webinar.

Next Steps

The project team is very interested in continuing to improve access to environmental justice after this phase of the project has been completed. While specific next steps are still being developed, two main objectives for future work have emerged.

Knowledge Dissemination of Navigating the Law Materials:

In Summer 2021, a communication and dissemination plan will be developed to inform a broader range of Manitobans about the webinars and supporting documents. In particular, focus will be on connecting with ENGOs and educators (especially high school teachers). It is anticipated that these dissemination activities will begin in early Fall 2021.

Assessing the Legal Services needed by Manitobans to support access to environmental justice:

The project team is interested in better understanding the demand for legal services that support the environmental objectives of those impacted by decisions centred in Manitoba (including Treaties 1, 2, 3 and 5).

We want to:

- Generate information about the environmental legal services that are of use, and interest to the underserved members of the policy community (e.g., the public, not-for-profits, non-governmental organizations, First Nations governments and municipal governments);
- Understand the barriers to environmental justice facing these underserved members of the policy community; and
- Identify the supports that participants would find valuable.

Conclusion

The legal processes available for citizens to seek recourse for environmental damage and challenge threats to environmental health are inherently complex, difficult to navigate and challenging for individuals and communities with no institutional experience. It is especially challenging for citizens living in rural and northern areas to participate when most legal resources are concentrated in Winnipeg. Low-income individuals, who are often disproportionately affected by environmental damage, also face additional barriers to participation in legal processes. This series has begun to address the need for improved access to quality information to facilitate greater public participation and engagement in environmental legal processes and to bolster access to environmental justice.

The strong participant response to this project is demonstrative of the need for increased access to public legal education initiatives in Manitoba, particularly in the field of environmental law. Public participation in regulatory and legislative processes is centrally important to the health and sustainability of our democratic society, and environmental law has a tremendous impact on the material wellbeing of that society.

The *Navigating the Law to Protect the Environment* webinar series has been successful because it provides content from trusted and authoritative sources, and it works to fill Manitoba's existing gap in public legal education on the topic of environmental law. Through the efforts of the Manitoba Eco-Network, this content has been centralized and will continue to be accessible to the public into the future. The organizing team feels that this series represents a strong foundation upon which additional publicly accessible projects in the area of environmental law could be conceived and carried out in response to community needs.

The benefits of working on this project have also extended to the organizations represented on the project's organizing team. Capacity for public engagement has improved and bridges have been built with previously unlinked organizations. In doing so, this series has strengthened connections between NGOs, experts and legal actors from across Canada who share the goal of improving access to environmental justice.

The organizing team would like to thank the Manitoba Law Foundation for its support in making this project a success. The provided funding has allowed for the production of high-quality content that reflects the needs expressed by the community we serve.