

Two Environmentalists, Taken Abruptly and Too Soon

by **MARK BULTER** /// EAC Volunteer



**Meinhard
Doelle**

1964-2022



**Burkhard
Plache**

1965-2022

I last saw Burkhard Plache determinedly cycling up the long incline of Devonshire Avenue on his way home from work. On September 10, Burkhard drowned while swimming in the Northumberland Strait. Burkhard was a physicist and worked as a software developer and system engineer. He could have been driving home in a shiny SUV but instead he was commuting on bicycle between work and his home in Jollimore where he lived with his loving partner, Ingrid. Burkhard moved from Germany to Canada in 1993. His ever-deepening knowledge and love of nature eventually lead him to become President of the Halifax Field Naturalists. Burkhard was a member and supporter of EAC and other nature groups for many years.

An account of his amazing life can be found at <https://bit.ly/BurkhardPlache>

In remembering Meinhard, I will start with a personal story. On September 13, I wrote to him asking if he would have a few minutes in his busy schedule in the coming week to help us think through and untangle a policy problem. Meinhard wrote back and said how about right now? My colleague and I hastily assembled our thoughts and, in the ensuing discussion, Meinhard untangled us. On the call he mentioned he was looking forward to the weekend and going to the family cottage on the Bay of Fundy. On Saturday September 17 he was killed by a motorist while out cycling.

In the tributes and memorials that followed one learnt that he was a mentor to so, so many. He was kind, generous and thoughtful to family, friends, colleagues, students, and to Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians. Lisa Mitchell, Executive Director of East Coast Environmental Law, in addressing a room of 600 people at Dalhousie, said she had a running list of questions for Meinhard, and he always found time to answer them. Meinhard was both generous and smart, qualities that aren't always found together.

Meinhard Doelle was a law professor at Dalhousie Law School and taught on climate, energy, and the environment. He made numerous and practical contributions to environmental policy and where it counts, to protecting the environment. He helped draft or advise on provincial and federal environmental legislation, including the Nova Scotia Environment Act. Written with his colleague, Bill Lahey, their **report** on aquaculture in Nova Scotia is one of the best guides to sustainable use of natural resources that exists. Meinhard was equally active off campus. Seeing a gap in Atlantic Canada, he founded the East Coast Environmental Law Association in 2007. He sat on the Board of the Ecology Action Centre for several years and was involved with other organizations at the national and international level.

When Meinhard died, his friend and colleague from University of Calgary, Dave Wright, immediately flew out to Nova Scotia to comfort and support family and friends. He organized a walk in Point Pleasant Park. Finding solace in their grief, Wendy, his wife, and Meinhard's three daughters, Klara, Alida and Nikola, were there to celebrate Meinhard's incredible life. Dave Wright said it well: "The finest human indeed."

A full description of Meinhard's many and enduring contributions can be found at <https://bit.ly/Meinhard>

Mark Bulter (he/him) is a senior advisor with Nature Canada, proud member of EAC, East Coast Environmental Law Association board member, and consultant.