

LET'S GIVE THEM A HAND

The people who work to protect wildlife don't always get the recognition they deserve. CWF's annual Conservation Achievement Awards gives some a moment in the sun.

KAMIL BIALOUS

Neil Fletcher, 2016 Stan Hodgkiss Canadian Outdoorsperson of the Year Award winner

Working to protect wildlife is its own reward. No one who takes on the task —in whatever way they choose— does so for the recognition. Still, it's important to pause now and again to acknowledge those whose efforts go above and beyond. That's why CWF takes time each year to honour groups and individuals for their exceptional contributions.

You'll meet the 2016 honourees in the profiles presented here. They represent a broad cross-section of Canadian life—artists, advocates, political and community leaders, educators and more—and diverse approaches to conservation. But they all share one thing in common: the drive to turn beliefs into action. We find their stories inspiring. We're sure you will, too.

PAST PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Honouring an elected legislator for contributions to the conservation of wildlife in Canada

ELIZABETH MAY



Most Canadians know Elizabeth May as the leader of the federal Green Party and, since 2011, as the member of Parliament for the riding of Saanich-Gulf Islands. These roles have propelled her to the forefront of the conservation movement in Canada—at least in terms of her reputation among the general public. Those who pay closer attention to environmental issues, however, will have known about May for much longer.

She first gained attention as an activist during the mid-1970s in Cape Breton when she played a leadership role in a campaign to block the aerial spraying of insecticides to combat a budworm infestation in Nova Scotia's forests. The effort became the foundation for her first book, *Budworm Battles: The Fight to Stop the Aerial Insecticide Spraying of the Forests of Eastern Canada*.

In the early 1980s, May earned a law degree from Dalhousie law school in Halifax and went on to become a senior policy advisor for then federal environment minister Tom McMillan in the Brian Mulroney government. During that time, she played instrumental roles in the creation of several national parks, including Gwaii Haanas National Park in British Columbia.

May rose to national prominence in 1989 when she joined the Sierra Club of Canada as its founding executive director, a position she held until 2006 when she became the leader of the Green Party.

Throughout her career, May's work has been recognized with awards at the local, national and international level. She is also the author of seven books in addition to *Budworm Battles*, including *At the Cutting Edge: The Crisis in Canada's Forests*, *How to Save the World in Your Spare Time* and *Global Warming for Dummies*.

ROBERT BATEMAN AWARD

For any group or individual who brings awareness to conservation through artistic work

SYLVIE ROUSSEL-JANSSENS

Wildlife and nature are fundamental to the art of Sylvie Roussel-Janssens, a born-and-raised Montrealer who has made British Columbia her home since 1980. She is best known for her sculptural installations, which she creates using a novel technique of burning small holes in synthetic fabrics of different colours to create images. She then assembles the pieces, sewing them together and linking them on wire frames. As the light shines through the burned fabric—either natural light when the panels are placed on windows or through lightboxes—the resulting images are warm and compelling. The messages they convey, however, raise serious issues about our relationship with nature.

Take Roussel-Janssens' piece "Turf Wars," a multi-panelled installation. Originally designed for the windows of the Great Hall at the Reach Gallery Museum in Abbotsford, B.C.—though it can be installed in a variety of spaces—the work depicts seven species at risk in B.C. Within the body of each animal is another image symbolizing a threat to the species—an oil rig inside a caribou, a logging barge inside a Pacific salmon, a construction crane inside a great blue heron.

Another installation, called "How Deep Is Your Lake?" is inspired by aquatic ecosystems. The work, designed for installation on windows, is a series of panels based on profiles of six B.C. lakes. The work features mirror images of each lake, one for each panel, representing different regions of the province. Roussel-Janssens has also stitched photocopied acetates of bathymetric (underwater depth) maps into each panel, creating images that are abstract from a distance but rich in geographic detail up close.

Other works of hers have explored the degradation of the Columbia Icefield, climate change in Canada's Far North and other environmental issues. Now based in Chilliwack—working from a farmhouse built in the 1920s—Roussel-Janssens continues to produce art inspired by the hope of having viewers ask questions about the world in which we live.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/MARIO BEAUGARD



ALTHOUGH WARM AND COMPELLING, THE MESSAGES IN ROUSSEL-JANSSENS' ART RAISE ISSUES ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE.

KAMIL BALOUS

STAN HODGKISS CANADIAN OUTDOORSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

In recognition of Canadian outdoorspeople who have demonstrated an active commitment to conservation

NEIL FLETCHER

In 1996, the British Columbia Wildlife Federation launched its Wetlands Education Program. The goal: to foster local stewardship of wetland ecosystems through workshops and outreach programs across the province. WEP was a success, earning a long-standing position in the federation's catalogue of activities.

In 2010, the federation appointed Neil Fletcher as WEP's program coordinator. He soon proved to be an excellent manager, especially when it came to securing grants, organizing workshops and travelling the province to facilitate them. But there was more to come. Not only was Fletcher good at management — he also showed just how much WEP could grow. Consider: in 2011, the federation hosted six workshops that reached 160 participants. In 2015, it hosted 28 workshops and outreach events, attracting 581 workshop participants and reaching 1,000 more through various programs.

The WEP has three programs at its core: Map Our Marshlands, a one-day event that teaches participants how to map small, underappreciated wetlands; Wetlandkeepers, a two-and-a-half-day workshop that trains community members to become wetland stewards; and the Wetlands Institute, a seven-day intensive program that teaches participants how to conserve, construct and restore wetlands.

In addition to these workshops, Fletcher has created new ones aimed at filling knowledge gaps. Among them are programs on building multi-stakeholder working groups, restoration design, bioblitzes and open houses. Fletcher has also created new educational resources for members of the public, such as landowner contact booklets and Bogblog, a website where people can share stories and photographs about wetland conservation.

When not actively engaged in wetland conservation — a rare moment, it would seem — Fletcher can be found outdoors with his wife, Eryne, a photographer, and the couple's toddler, Ourigan, enjoying a paddle in their homemade canoe, hiking or snowshoeing. If you can't find Fletcher there, check out the local nature organizations where he is also an active volunteer.



ROLAND MICHENER CONSERVATION AWARD

Honouring the commitment by an individual to promote and enhance the conservation of Canada's natural resources

LORNE G. MANN

You're probably familiar with the old nature travel mantra "take only pictures, leave only footprints." Too bad that wasn't the case with a parcel of land bought by Lorne Mann at the junction of the Peace and Smokey rivers near Peace River, Alta. The site had formerly been used as a paintball field — and it showed. The land was littered with dilapidated buildings, open trenches and assorted debris, including 550 wooden pallets.

Mann, however, saw beyond the mess and set out to restore the space — a perfect spot for river views — so that its natural assets could be enjoyed once more. He began by clearing out the junk left by the paintballers, stabilizing slough and slide areas, clearing thistle patches by hand and filling in trenches that were a threat to both wildlife and people. Next, he turned to making the site appealing to nature enthusiasts. Mann planted trees, groomed walking trails, installed benches and posted signs banning motorized vehicles.

Mann continues to work the site, planting more trees, connecting trails to create loops and protecting native vegetation. And he is already seeing results from his efforts. Families, hikers, skiers, people walking pets and cyclists have become regular visitors year-round, taking in the picture-perfect views of the river junction. (Professional photographers frequently use the site, as well.) And then there's the wildlife — coyotes, bears, elk, deer, boreal birds, native flora and more — that have returned, no doubt grateful for the land's recovery from its paintball past.

KAMIL BALOUS

LEAH WOOD

MANN HAS WORKED HARD TO REHABILITATE HIS LAND AFTER ITS PAINTBALL PAST



ANDERSON'S COMMITMENT TO NATURE AND EDUCATION BEGAN AS A CHILD WHEN SHE WOULD ACCOMPANY HER MOTHER ON DISCOVERY WALKS



NEL EVER OSBORNE

JENNIFER PAIGE/MANITOBA CO-OPERATOR

WILD EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD
*In honour of an exceptional WILD Education
facilitator or instructor*

BONNIE ANDERSON

Meet Bonnie Anderson, winner of the inaugural WILD Educator of the Year award. Bonnie has been with CWF's WILD Education program in Ontario since 1988. Her work continues to this day, training educators to deliver programs for youth such as Below Zero, Project WILD, Focus on Forests and other integrated workshops.

Of course, Anderson's commitment to nature and education goes far beyond her work with CWF. It began in her childhood, when she would accompany her mother on discovery walks. Later, she joined the Girl Guides, developed a love for camping and went on to become an enthusiastic camp counsellor.

As a young adult, Anderson's love of the outdoors led her to Humber College's recreation leadership program and the Katimavik program. From there, she studied at the University of Waterloo, Sir Wilfrid Laurier University and Queen's University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in education.

Throughout her career, Anderson has kept nature and conservation at the centre of her work. She has spent 18 years with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, where she established many innovative programs. Between 2007 and 2011, she also worked at the Bark Lake Leadership Centre, an outdoor education and leadership facility in Irondale, Ont., near Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park.

In 2013 and 2014, Anderson also travelled to the Arctic to participate in CWF's Summer Institute program. She translated those experiences into workshops she now gives to students and teachers, focused on northern issues such as aboriginal culture and food security.

Over the course of her career, Anderson's work has been widely recognized. Among the honours she has received are the Susan Wiecek Forestry Award for promoting forest ecology and education; a Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for contributions to the natural community and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for contributions to environmental education programs. In 2012, Anderson was also the feature children's program writer for climate and polar issues at the Children's Museum of Italy.



YOUTH CONSERVATION AWARD
*Recognizing the contribution of individual youths or
youth groups to wildlife or habitat conservation projects*

RIVERS WETLANDS LEARNING CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

If you'd travelled to the Town of Rivers, Man., a few years ago and walked along the path of its Aspen Trail, you would have come across an old railway gravel pit. The pit was eventually shut down and bulldozed as part of a reclamation project. Over time, it filled with water and a small wetland began to form.

Today, that spot is home to the Wetlands Learning Centre of Excellence, a project led by the local high school, Rivers Collegiate, to promote conservation to students, the community and visitors.

Work on the project began in 2012 with a land-use agreement from the Town of Rivers. That was followed by bathymetric analysis and mapping of the wetland. Docks were constructed and brought down to the area. Nesting boxes and bat boxes were constructed and installed. In the spring of 2015, Trees Canada planted 92,000 trees.

Conservation organizations have supported the project from the outset, including Ducks Unlimited, the Rivers and Area Game and Fish Association, and the Little Saskatchewan Water Conservation District.

But the stars of the Wetlands Learning Centre of Excellence are the students from Rivers Collegiate. As part of the school's outdoor education course, Grade 10 students receive training as interpreters provided by staff from Winnipeg's Fort Whyte environmental education centre and Spruce Woods Provincial Park. Then the Rivers Collegiate students deliver programs at the wetlands centre to elementary-level students.

Besides working as interpreters, Rivers Collegiate students support and benefit from the Wetlands Learning Centre of Excellence in many other ways. Grade 11 and Grade 12 students have been involved in developing the wetlands' site plan, including creating interpretive signage, building trails and removing invasive plants. Computer drafting students have contributed to the design of an outdoor classroom structure and an observation tower. Woodworking students have made nesting boxes and bat boxes, while desktop publishing students have created interpretive materials and lessons for elementary-age students.

Coming up next? Students are helping to build a pond-aeration system, consisting of a 3.5-metre windmill, compressors and diffusers.

YOUTH MENTOR AWARD

Honouring an individual or group that creates, presents or encourages conservation, habitat or wildlife programs for youth

FORUM JEUNESSE DE L'ABITIBI-TEMISCAMINGUE

The region around Abitibi-Témiscamingue is rightfully famous for its lakes and rivers. At the same time, however, those bodies of water are suffering from issues including declining fish populations, blue-green algae blooms and shoreline erosion leading to the deterioration of aquatic habitats.

Forum Jeunesse de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue is facing these challenges head on. It's the organization behind a broad community partnership—including schools, business, industry and other organizations—that formed to create a program called Engagés au fil de l'eau.

The goal of Engagés, now in its third year, is to educate local youth on environmental issues related to the conservation of aquatic ecosystems. The program's signature elements are hands-on activities that help young people explore issues, discover their local aquatic habitats and learn how to protect them. Programs have included adopt-a-river projects, the development of an amphibian and reptile inventory, and the installation of nesting boxes for tree swallows and wood ducks.

More than 4,000 area youth—from young children to people in their early 20s—have participated in Engagés au fil de l'eau since its launch. A further 10,000 people have been exposed to its educational messaging. These are important numbers, as awareness about wildlife and environmental issues is the cornerstone of conservation. Thanks to Engagés au fil de l'eau, that awareness is reaching new heights in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.



DOUG CLARKE MEMORIAL AWARD

Presented to a CWF affiliate for the most outstanding conservation project completed during the previous year by its members

LAKE ONTARIO ATLANTIC SALMON RESTORATION PROGRAM

More than a century ago, Lake Ontario was home to a thriving population of Atlantic salmon. Thriving perhaps, but not so much that the fish could withstand the pressure of human development. By the end of the 19th century, the salmon populations were no more.

But things are looking up for the species. Give credit to the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, a project to bring the salmon back, led by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and other partners and sponsors.

One of the program's most recent accomplishments has been the creation of a bypass channel around a pond to improve the migration path for adult salmon on spawning runs. The project focused on an area along Mitchell Creek at the Transport Canada Pickering Land Site on federal lands in Pickering. To improve migration conditions, volunteers dug a 420-metre channel next to the stream to create a diversion around a pond, which was warming the waters of Mitchell Creek and creating unfavourable habitat.

A field next to the channel was then converted into a wetland to maintain waterflows to Mitchell Creek. More work followed to develop the local ecosystem, supported by community and student volunteer work. In October, 2014, 101 volunteers came out to plant native shrubs—700 in all—along a 115-metre stretch of the stream. A few weeks later, students from Dunbarton High School participated in two events that saw 700 shrubs planted along the bank of the bypass channel. That was followed with the planting of 363 trees by students from Claremont Public School.

A fifth planting—by a Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Project staff member and two co-op students—saw 2,000 live willow cuttings planted along a 50-metre stretch of the stream bank.

The Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program has many more facets—and many more projects to come. With the help of supporters, Lake Ontario's salmon once more have a fighting chance.

NEL EVER OSBORNE

RODERICK HAIG-BROWN AWARD

Awarded to an individual who has contributed to the conservation and the wise use of recreational fisheries in Canada

D.C. REID

If you want to know about sport fishing in Canada's most western provinces—especially British Columbia—D.C. Reid is the person you want to look up. A lifelong enthusiast, he's said to have reached into a creek near his Calgary home at the age of five and pulled out his first trout. He spent the next two decades exploring the waterways of southern Alberta as an angler and nature lover.

In the mid-1970s, Reid moved to Vancouver Island, where his public profile truly began to emerge. In the years that followed, he explored more than 40 of the island's rivers, becoming an accomplished fly fisherman and fly tyer whose work is featured in *A Compendium of Canadian Fly Patterns*.

In that time, Reid also emerged as one of Canada's leading writers on sport fishing and fisheries policy. He has published articles in more than 50 newspapers, magazines and websites across North America and is the author of 12 books, including novels, non-fiction and collections of poetry inspired by his outdoor experiences. Among them are titles such as *Fishing for Dreams*, a memoir of his angling experiences on the west coast of B.C., and *Vancouver Island Fishing Guide*, the go-to reference for sport fishers.

One of Reid's most significant contributions to sport fishing and fisheries policy, however, may be his work as a tireless advocate for ending the environmentally damaging practice of farming Atlantic salmon in open-ocean pens. An expert researcher and commentator, he has written extensively on the subject, challenging claims of the economic benefits of open-water fish farming in B.C., exploring the environmental consequences of the business and lobbying the federal and provincial governments to bring fish farming to land-based facilities.

KAWIL BALOUS

