

Celebration Action

The Canadian Wildlife Federation's annual awards salute Canadians who make a difference

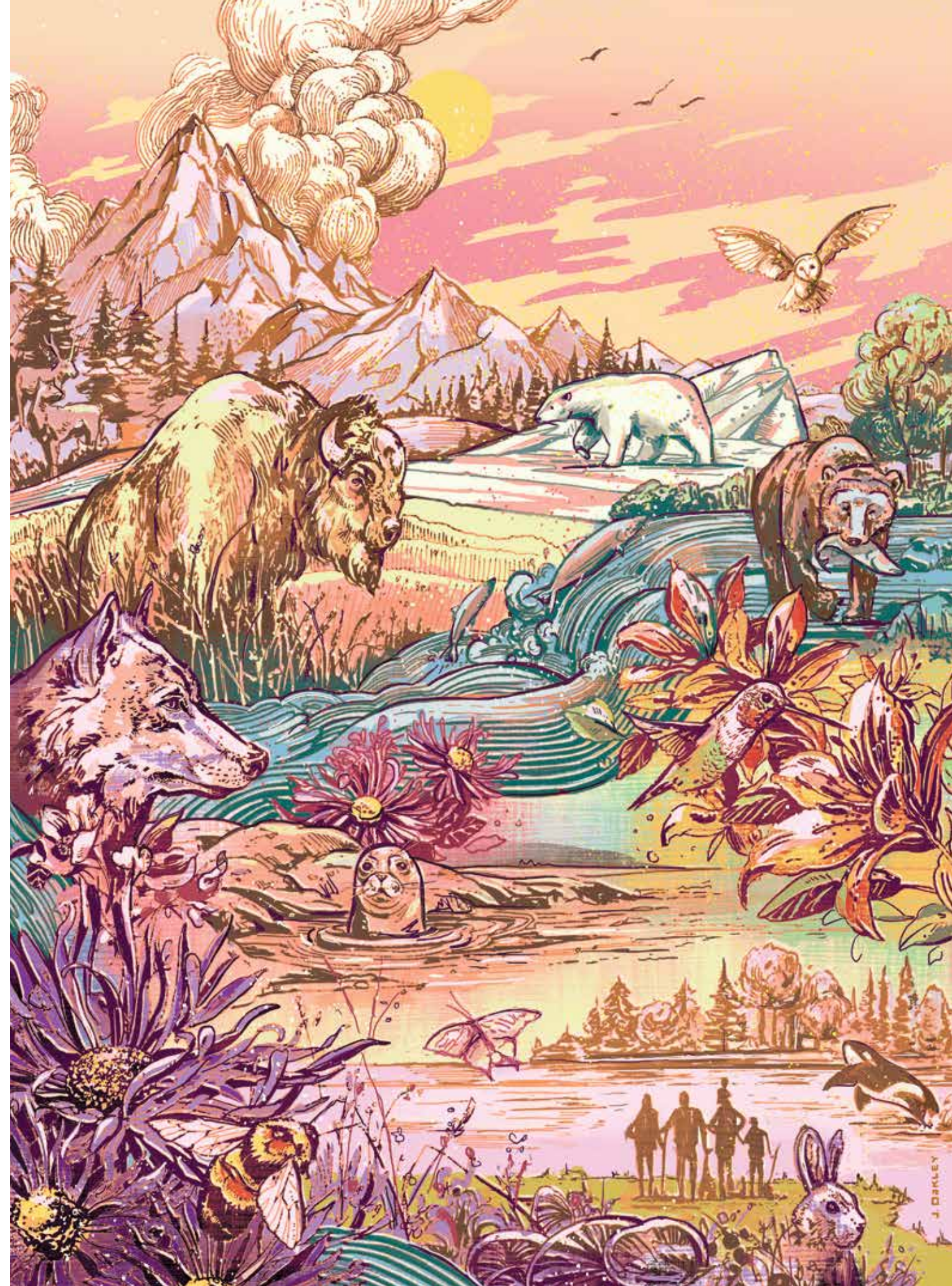
Illustration by Jacqui Oakley

THROUGH ITS AWARDS EACH YEAR, THE CANADIAN Wildlife Federation recognizes the contributions and celebrates the efforts of Canadians who generously spent their time and energy pitching in. These award recipients have worked to conserve, protect and enhance our national heritage and have inspired others to do the same.

This year, CWF celebrates a passionate Ontario youth, a committed scuba diver intent on cleaning Newfoundland's harbours, a retired Alberta park superintendent who is also an award-winning conservation writer, a recently elected New Brunswick politician with a love of nature, an influential B.C. conservation maven, a superhero on a mission to teach kids about science and a grassroots organization devoted to expanding a network of essential volunteer-run fish hatcheries. A diverse and varied group, they nonetheless share some key attributes: a desire to contribute to a conservation ethos through commitment, passion, engagement and action — and in doing so, inspire others to do the same. They are leaders, yes, but they are also exemplars of all Canadians who pitch in. Statistics Canada has found that nearly one in five households in Canada (18 per cent) engage in unpaid conservation activities, and those that are home to children and teens are more than twice as likely to have pitched in. The numbers for 20-somethings and seniors are also considerable. These awards celebrate them all.

The awards are also a call to action. There are many ways in which we can each get involved to help the environment. Some join organized events such as local park cleanup days, beachcombing litter pickup efforts and community plantings. These may be organized through municipalities, schools, sports clubs, recreation centres, and community and religious organizations. Not only do these groups support important activities, but they rally communities together, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. Others may prefer more self-directed efforts, which can be as simple as picking up litter, writing letters to authorities encouraging action or donating to groups they support. Others enjoy playing the role of citizen scientist, contributing time and energy to collect and submit valuable data and on-the-ground observations.

Whatever your preference, we encourage you to join these noteworthy volunteers in contributing to the conservation of our country's species and natural habitats. There is much to be done.





Aiden Brushett

WHITBY, ONTARIO

Wade Luzny Youth Conservation Award

This award was renamed in honour of CWF's much-admired executive director who died unexpectedly in 2016. It recognizes Canadian youth who have undertaken wildlife or habitat conservation projects and activities that have helped make a difference to the environment.

BEES AND OTHER POLLINATORS, CRITICALLY essential to our ecosystems, are threatened by habitat loss and encroaching invasive species, climate change and neonicotinoids. For the situation to improve, everyone needs to be engaged in conservation efforts. That's why there has been so much buzz about Aiden Brushett. It all started when he was 15 and keen to do something positive for bees at his high school. He assembled a group of like-minded students to revitalize a school courtyard by adding native plant species, and from there he went on to organize awareness activities and projects involving the whole school. From these modest beginnings grew a movement in other schools and elsewhere involving scores of volunteers and numerous plantings. The movement grew even more as Brushett lobbied local councillors and the mayor and worked with municipal staff and environmental committees to create an action plan that would encompass the entire community. As a result of all this hard work, Whitby was officially designated Canada's 10th Bee City, signifying its active commitment to creating pollinator habitat on municipal lands and to community education and engagement to actively encourage native pollinators. (Learn more at beecitycanada.org.) A member of the youth council for the non-profit group Ontario Nature, Brushett is now an undergraduate at the University of Guelph in the wildlife biology and conservation program.



Kevin Van Tighem

CANMORE, ALBERTA

Robert Bateman Award

In commemoration of its 50th anniversary and in salute to an extraordinary artist and nature lover, the Canadian Wildlife Federation established this award to recognize those who, through artistic expression, have furthered the awareness of and appreciation for Canada's wildlife and habitats and their conservation.

BORN AND RAISED IN CALGARY, KEVIN VAN Tighem has been championing Alberta's natural splendour ever since. In 1977, as a graduate of his hometown university with a burgeoning expertise in plant ecology, he joined the Canadian Wildlife Service. He served as a biologist in some of Canada's iconic national parks. He then moved to Parks Canada for a long and distinguished career culminating in the role of superintendent of Banff National Park. During his career, he began his work as writer of fiction and nonfiction in articles, essays and books on conservation and wildlife that have garnered him many awards. Since retiring, he has authored numerous books, including *Bears Without Fear*, *The Homeward Wolf*, *Heart Waters: Sources of the Bow River* and *Our Place: Changing the Nature of Alberta*. He writes a regular column for Alberta Views magazine and continues to be active on issues affecting headwaters and prairie conservation. An excerpt from *Heart Waters*: "We could be like the bull trout, the willows, the wary horses; like the river that continuously arises from these fine green places where the waters are born. We could find our best selves in the stories of those living waters and the river that gathers them together. Ultimately, after all, we are that river."



Alan Martin

SURREY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Roland Michener Conservation Award

This award was established in 1978 by the Canadian Wildlife Federation as a tribute to former governor general Roland Michener (1900-1991). An outstanding outdoorsperson and role model for a generation, he served as an honorary president of the CWF. The award is given each year to an individual or organization demonstrating a commitment to conservation through responsible activities that promote, enhance and further the conservation of Canada's natural resources.

THIS YEAR'S MICHENER AWARD HAS BEEN awarded posthumously to Alan Martin, who succumbed to cancer in October 2019 at the age of 67. Described as a "giant in the conservation community" he was known, say his nominators, for his vision and integrity and his ability to think strategically. During a distinguished 30-year career in the B.C. public service, he served in many roles, including assistant deputy minister of agriculture and fisheries and as executive director of fish, wildlife and ecosystems conservation. After he retired, Martin moved to the charitable sector, becoming the director of strategic initiatives for the B.C. Wildlife Federation while also volunteering on many boards, including for the Sport Fishing Advisory Board executive and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation. Doug Donaldson, B.C. minister of forests, lands and natural resources, said "Al played a role in nearly all facets of the modern history of conservation in British Columbia.... A tremendous example of his leadership was the Watershed Restoration Program. The conservation legacy of this program was immense, but just as important was his mentorship and inspiration to a generation of conservation biologists and citizen groups. Al's legacy will live on."

Mike Holland

NEW BRUNSWICK

Past Presidents' Canadian Legislator Award

The Past Presidents' Canadian Legislator Award was established in 1988 by former heads of the Canadian Wildlife Federation. This award is presented annually to an elected provincial, territorial or federal legislator in recognition of a significant contribution to the conservation of wildlife in Canada.

IN A PROVINCE OF ABUNDANT RIVERS, STREAMS and lakes, sprawling forests and spectacular coastal shoreline, nature is central to employment, the economy, recreation and, well, to being a New Brunswicker. Since being elected in November 2018, and subsequently appointed Minister of Energy and Resource Development, Michael "Mike" Holland has introduced legislation addressing water quality, sustainable forestry and land use. Raised on a farm near Miramichi, N.B., he has brought a love of nature to an important ministry at a time of profound challenge. In October 2019, in a bold stroke, Holland announced the new government's commitment to conserving 10 per cent of New Brunswick's land by this year, more than double the existing protection and bringing the province closer to the national commitment of 17 per cent. Since then, the Minister has tabled several sustainability initiatives in short order including sustainable forestry legislation. And in an announcement that caught most everyone by surprise and delighted many, he announced that Shepody Mountain, an impressive 700-hectare forested landmark on Crown land, would be designated conservation land and largely protected from logging.



Steven Rosenstein

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Youth Mentor Award

This award honours an individual or group that has made a significant contribution in creating or presenting programs that introduce youth to the importance of conservation, habitat and wildlife.

IT IS A CONCERNING REALITY THAT YOUNG

Canadian children have not always been given the opportunity and inspiration they need to discover the joys of nature. For the next generations to grow to be active stewards of Canada's ecological heritage, they need information and inspiration. Captain Catalyst is on the job! Actually, his name is Steven Rosenstein, and for 35 years, he has been educating children about science. Over that time, working in various cities in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec, Rosenstein a.k.a. Captain Catalyst has reached and inspired more than 400,000 children. He combines a background in wildlife science and creative writing and a master's degree in science education with boundless energy and playfulness that kids of all ages find irresistible. Rosenstein developed the Science Playground for Children, an innovative program of fun presentations and hands-on science and nature workshops on everything from paleontology to ecology, opening up the natural world to young children to explore through play. Whether he's talking about a trip to Mars or a nature walk in the park, Rosenstein is a catalyst for future change.

Shawn Bath

TWILLINGATE, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Stan Hodgkiss Outdoorsperson of the Year Award

Since 1975, the Outdoorsperson of the Year Award has been presented every year to a Canadian who has demonstrated an active and enduring commitment to conservation. The award was renamed in honour of CWF's founding president Stan Hodgkiss.



WITH MORE THAN 20 YEARS' EXPERIENCE AS a commercial diver in the waters off Newfoundland, Shawn Bath is as comfortable beneath the surface of the cold North Atlantic as anyone you'll ever meet. Over that time, the Twillingate, N.L., native has noted with alarm that the province's harbours are filled with shocking amounts of garbage. He is particularly concerned about the countless "ghost nets" he encounters drifting beneath the surface: "I swam across an old ghost net, just sitting there on the bottom. It contained crab, flounder, manta ray, sea birds, sea urchins and, most disturbing one of all, a drowned harp seal. Heartbreaking..." Bath was so moved by the mess that in May 2018 he started the Clean Harbours Initiative to publicize the problem and engage the public in his efforts to reverse the damage. Since then, he has been personally responsible for removing more than 7,200 kg of ocean trash, including 1,200 tires and 17 ghost nets. In an effort to accomplish even more, Bath has launched a GoFundMe crowdsourcing initiative to raise \$25,000 to cover the cost of gas, supplies and eventually wages for more divers and supporters to help. (Bath is not paid for the work he has been doing; it is strictly volunteer.) He welcomes all support. In a poignant gesture in February of this year, the family of Lindsay Petten, a respected local fisherman and fellow diver who drowned tragically last year, donated one of his boats to help take on this enormous task. "There's enough trash on the bottom to keep 100 divers going in this province for years to come," Bath said in an interview with the CBC. Visit the Clean Harbours Initiative Facebook page to learn how you can support this important work.





Community Hatchery Program

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS

Doug Clarke Memorial Award

This award was founded in 1982 in memory of C.H.D. Clarke, who devoted his career to the philosophy, science and art of wildlife management. At the time of his death in 1981, he was a director of the Canadian Wildlife Federation. This award is presented to a CWF affiliate for the most outstanding conservation project completed by its clubs or members during the previous year.

*I*N 2013, THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS, working with Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, launched a program to provide financial and technical support to small community fish culture stations throughout the province in their essential work enhancing angling opportunities and species rehabilitation efforts. Over the past seven years, the program has expanded its capacity, funding and outreach to community-run hatcheries: in 2019, it distributed \$150,000 in provincial operational and capital improvement grant funding to organizations from 37 communities that engaged 1,085 volunteers. Together they raised and stocked eight million walleye, chinook salmon, coho salmon, rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout into public waters in Ontario and did species restoration work with lake trout, Atlantic salmon and muskellunge. By facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technical expertise among small community hatcheries, the program assists with addressing government requirements and provides support for fish health testing, proper egg collection, and rearing and stocking procedures. Brian McLeod, president of the Atikokan Sportsmen's Conservation Club, says his small community-based conservation club and walleye hatchery in northwestern Ontario relies on the program's technical support, in addition to the much-needed provincial funding. "The technical assistance we really cherish. Their manuals and how-to videos on the complete operation of a hatchery are invaluable... and their website is a valuable service that enables all the hatcheries to share the knowledge that they have gained."

GET ACTIVE

As a national charity, the Canadian Wildlife Federation is dedicated to ensuring an appreciation of our natural world and a lasting legacy of healthy wildlife and habitat for future generations. CWF engages and inspires Canadians by developing and delivering education programs, sponsoring research, promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and advocating for policy changes. In addition to the **Conservation Achievement Awards**, which celebrate deserving conservationists across Canada, here are some key CWF initiatives.

The **WILD Family Nature Club** inspires a love of nature in others by connecting children and families to a world of outdoor play and exploration in which CWF's **WILD Outside** is a national leadership program for youths ages 15 to 18. CWF facilitators help young Canadians learn how to be part of a team, develop a conservation ethic and plan a community-based action project. The **Canadian Conservation Corps** engages Canadians ages 18 to 30 through service, adventure and reflection over an intensive nine-month program that culminates in a meaningful service project right in their own communities.

CWF has partnered with key Canadian institutions to bring **iNaturalist** to Canada. It is an innovative and easy-to-use online platform where anyone can record and share what they have observed in nature. The cumulative data is available to researchers, academics and governments to monitor changes in biodiversity and develop a comprehensive and informed picture of our biodiversity.

Every April, **National Wildlife Week** (a major Canadian Wildlife Federation initiative) celebrates this country's natural heritage and promotes conservation in Canada. Check in with CWF each year for information on events and ideas to plan your own activities.

To learn more about each of these programs and to nominate someone for next year's awards, visit cwf-fcf.org.