

ROLAND MICHENER CONSERVATION AWARD

Mary Asselstine

Schomberg, Ont.

An outspoken and effective community advocate and respected conservation leader with a 35-year history of committed volunteer work, Mary Asselstine is a founding member of the Dufferin Marsh Nature Connection.

FROM THE NOMINATORS

Mary Asselstine focuses on protecting cultural heritage, supporting local businesses, promoting energy efficiency, providing walkable, healthy and safe communities, protecting the natural environment and integrating the built environment with the natural environment.

Asselstine has fostered appreciation for the importance of the natural environment and has helped raise awareness that has translated into action in protecting and preserving our natural resources. She has changed hearts and minds and motivated people to act. Asselstine is a force of nature and a force for nature.

MOTIVATION

I enjoy sharing my knowledge and love of nature, and I believe that encouraging a connection to nature results in a more caring and compassionate community. Motivation for this work also comes from the joy I feel when I witness the miracles of nature, both small and dramatic.

THE AWARD

Established in 1978 by the Canadian Wildlife Federation, this award is a tribute to the former governor general of Canada, an outstanding outdoorsperson and past honorary president of the federation. It is awarded to any individual who has demonstrated a commitment to conservation through effective and responsible activities that promote, enhance and further the conservation of Canada's natural resources.

NATURAL LEADERS

The Canadian Wildlife Federation presents its annual awards celebrating community members, educators, students and visionaries who are leading the way on conservation

MIKE FORD



STAN HODGKISS CANADIAN OUTDOORSPERSON OF THE YEAR

Sonya Richmond

Sechelt, B.C. (when not on a trail somewhere in Canada)

Analyst at Birds Canada with a PhD in forestry. Creator of Come Walk With Us, a national outreach project to inspire young Canadians of all backgrounds to explore nature and become their communities' conservation stewards.

FROM THE NOMINATORS

In 2019, Sonya Richmond sold her house and suspended her career to self-fund an expedition and conservation outreach campaign to traverse the 27,000-kilometre Trans Canada Trail. Her goal: to visit (along with her partner, Sean Morton) 15,000 communities and to inspire people of all ages, abilities, cultures, genders, orientations and identities to reconnect with nature. As of December 2021, Richmond had hiked more than 10,000 km, delivered more than 100 presentations, published over 700 blog posts, made thousands of Facebook and Instagram posts, and received national and international attention.

MOTIVATION

I decided to take the career I had dedicated to conservation in a new direction—one I hoped would inspire others. My goal is to use an epic journey to capture the imaginations of people in the digital world by showing them the wonders of Canada's natural world. Nature is both our inheritance and the legacy we leave to future generations. I seek to inform, educate and inspire Canadians—especially youth—to renew their interest in nature and to empower them to become contributing scientists, engaged community leaders and lifelong conservationists.

THE AWARD

Since 1975, this award has been presented to an outstanding individual in the field of conservation in Canada. It is named in honour of CWF's founding president.

ROBERT BATEMAN AWARD

Amy Lynn Hein

Calgary, Alta.

An artist specializing in botanical illustration, handmade pottery and natural dyes inspired by nature, Amy Lynn Hein is also a *National Geographic* certified educator, the writer of the blog *A Pint Sized Impact* and the illustrator of *A Forever Home*, a children's book.

MOTIVATION

I am motivated by the idea that small actions can create big change, like one backyard garden being part of a larger urban landscaping map for local bees. The process of changing lifestyle habits does not happen overnight and is rather a journey of small changes. My blog allows me to express my love of nature and my commitment to improving the human impacts on the world. Artistic creation is one of the ways I like to talk about our connection to wildlife and nature. Through my drawings, paintings, writing and pottery, I hope to show a positive view of how beautiful the Earth is and the small actions we can take to make it more beautiful.

INFLUENCES

When I was young, my parents were always taking my siblings and me out to explore. A lifetime of being outside has created a true connection to wildlife and nature. My connection was built from these experiences. I learned that we live with the Earth, not just on it.

THE AWARD

Presented to those who bring awareness to conservation through an artistic means, be it painting, sculpture, photography, writing, song or dance. Created on the occasion of CWF's 50th anniversary, this award is named in celebration of Canada's admired and treasured naturalist and painter.

SONYA RICHMOND

MEAGHAN BAXTER





COURTESY/TIMMY

THE AWARD

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

YOUTH MENTOR AWARD

Todd Hollett

Burin Bay Arm, N.L.

Conservation officer, forestry and wildlife division, Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

FROM THE NOMINATORS

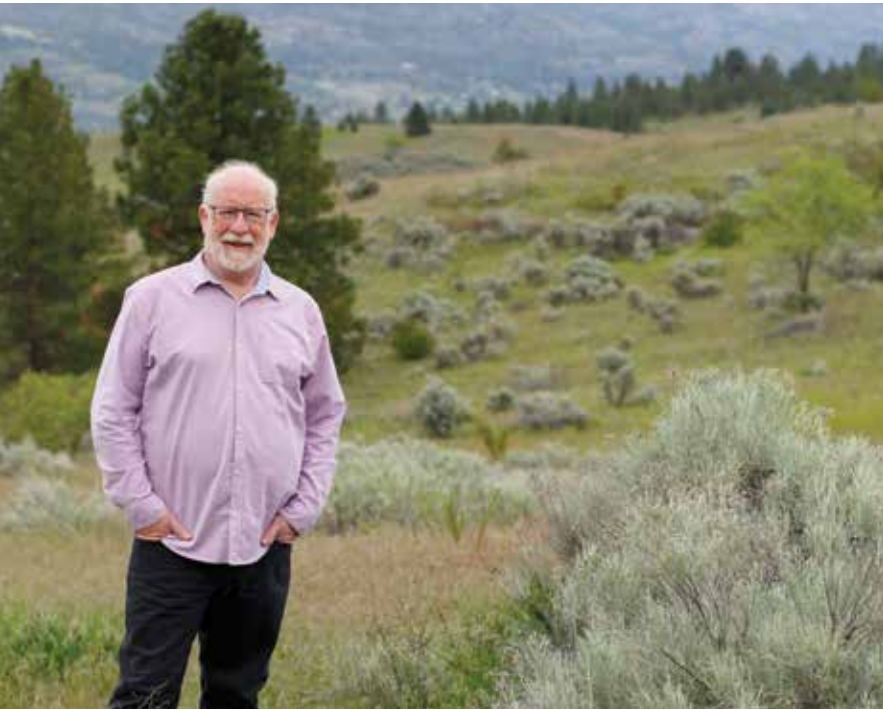
Todd Hollett has been involved in wildlife education since he was a teenager, when he volunteered to teach ecology in local schools and libraries and to youth groups such as Beavers, Cubs and Guides. Later he was employed as a park naturalist at the renowned Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve, where he developed a successful school outreach program. As a provincial conservation officer, he is a regular presenter at local schools, often bringing injured or relocated wildlife to help students gain respect for nature.

MOTIVATION

I've always had a desire to educate people about our natural environment, particularly to help younger generations appreciate nature. They are the future of conservation.

INFLUENCES

My father and I hunted when I was growing up, and he instilled in me the value of sustainability. That meant only taking game that we needed, always legally, and never being wasteful while doing everything we could do to help conserve nature. Another mentor was conservation officer Joseph Furlong, who played a huge part in me becoming a conservation officer too. He passed away in 2021; I know he would have been proud of me receiving this award.



PAST PRESIDENTS' CANADIAN LEGISLATOR AWARD

Richard Cannings

THREE-TERM MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, RETIRED BIOLOGIST

South Okanagan-West Kootenay, B.C.

In December 2021, Cannings introduced a private member's bill to establish a new Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights to enshrine the right to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment.

MOTIVATION

I've always been interested and concerned about environmental and conservation issues, and I got into politics to provide an informed voice from the environmental sciences in Parliament.

INFLUENCES

My parents, Steve and Jean Cannings, were keen naturalists and conservationists; they were "environmentalists" back in the early 1960s before anyone was using that term. So it's literally part of my DNA. As a family we would go on weekly hikes, drives and picnics that all centred on learning about the natural world— watching birds, photographing flowers, fishing. My parents would point out the unique and endangered wildlife in the desert grasslands and dry forests of the Okanagan Valley where we lived. I also single out my Grade 12 biology teacher, Harold Baumbrough, who focused my interest in nature.

THE AWARD

This award, established in 1988, is presented annually to a provincial, territorial or federal elected legislator in recognition of a significant contribution toward the conservation of wildlife in Canada.

WILD EDUCATOR AWARD

Rob Ridley

Caledon, Ont.

Environmental education teacher since 1987. Coordinator, since 2003, of the Peel District School Board's four field centres, which reach 25,000 students each year.

FROM THE NOMINATORS

Rob Ridley has been a much-admired WILD Education facilitator leading Project WILD and Below Zero workshops for more than 20 years. During that time, he has engaged countless K-12 teachers, non-formal educators and teachers-in-training across Ontario, providing them with tools to help them connect youth to nature and grow their conservation ethic, always with his remarkable enthusiasm and adaptability.

MOTIVATION

When I started, outdoor education was still very much seen as being about "the yearbook memories." Today, a big part of the job we do in outdoor and experiential environmental education, I feel, is to answer the age-old question, "When am I ever going to use this?" Of course, we may see the kids one or two days of the year, but then they carry those experiences back into the classroom.

INSPIRATION

I call the campfire the perfect 21st-century learning tool. In fact, it has been throughout history, in Ancient Greece, in Indigenous cultures. It is a chance to sit in a circle, to reflect and to listen to an elder or a teacher or a peer. There is no real "leader." You can be a lot more open and honest when everyone is staring into the flames of a campfire.

THE AWARD

First awarded in 2016, this honour salutes exceptional instructors using CWF's education programs to provide youth with innovative and meaningful experiences that focus on wildlife and building a conservation ethic.

JESSICA ZAIS

MIKE FORD



WADE LUZNY YOUTH CONSERVATION AWARD

Hannah Moran-MacDonald

Kingston, Ont.

Age 20, Hannah Moran-MacDonald is an environmental biology student at Queen's University. Long involved in environmental issues through her artwork, now at university she is co-manager of the Earth Centre, member of the Society for Conservation Biology, Kingston Chapter, and a volunteer with the Kingston Youth Climate Action group.

FROM THE NOMINATORS

In 2021, as a second-year environmental biology student, Moran-MacDonald connected in-class teachings to real-life problems. She enlisted fellow student-friends to collaborate, and, together, they wrote a proposal for funding for their project to help mitigate the problem of invasive moths in the Kingston area. The students mapped out areas of concern, wrapped trees on participating private farms and lands, used moth traps to attract them away from foliage and monitored these efforts throughout summer.

MOTIVATION

I was motivated to act by what I had learned in school about invasive species and the destruction of deciduous forests. The Frontenac Arch is a key biosphere reserve that deserves protection and understanding. We can live in a world where people and nature thrive, but it needs passion turned into action. Be an activist for what you believe in—the world needs visions of a hopeful future.

THE AWARD

This award was rededicated to honour 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.



SANDRA RANDALL



RODERICK HAIG-BROWN AWARD

Bobbi Rose Koe

Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'an territory in Whitehorse, Y.T.

The owner of Dinjii Zhuh Adventures, an Indigenous outdoor expedition company offering guides and full-tripping services to individuals and youth and community groups, Bobbi Rose Koe also works as a community connector for the Western Arctic Youth Collective, empowering Beaufort Delta youth to be changemakers through collaborative initiatives and partnerships in their communities.

MOTIVATION

As members of Teetl'it Gwich'in First Nations, raised in Teetl'it Zheh [Fort McPherson, N.W.T.], we are caretakers and have important responsibilities to our ancestors and future generations. It's thousands of years of strength, love, resilience and power of the Indigenous peoples who have been living here, having relationships and connection with the land, creator, water, animals, birds, medicines, stars, sun and moon.

INFLUENCES

I will always be so thankful to Chief Johnny W. Kay—when I was 11, he was a guide and teacher—for all his teachings, bravery and kindness. He always told me I could do anything I put my mind and heart into. *Haii choo* to the leaders like him, past and present, who continue to do this work and to their families who support them.

THE AWARD

Any individual who has made a significant contribution to the conservation, development and wise use of Canada's recreational fisheries is eligible for this award. It honours Roderick Haig-Brown (1908-1976), a passionate advocate of nature who immigrated to Canada as a young man and became a self-taught and avid conservationist, a powerful voice for protecting the B.C. salmon run and a gifted essayist.



DOUG CLARKE MEMORIAL AWARD

Operation Grassland Community

ALBERTA FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION
EVERETT HANNA, PROJECT MANAGER

Edmonton, Alta.

Launched in 1989, Operation Grassland Community recruits ranchers and landowners throughout southern Alberta as active conservation stewards of crucial species at risk, while allowing them “to sustain themselves and live productively.” It has established voluntary stewardship agreements with more than 300 landholders, encompassing more than 340,000 hectares of native prairie habitat in the province.

The program’s goal is to conserve prairie habitat and wildlife species, including the burrowing owl, the loggerhead shrike, Sprague’s pipit and the ferruginous hawk. Operation Grassland Community offers education and outreach to increase awareness of prairie wildlife habitat needs, fosters habitat conservation and sustainable agriculture, and helps landholders implement effective land management techniques to meet these goals.

EVERETT HANNA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

In Alberta, only a small portion of our grasslands remain in semi- or fully intact states, and a large proportion of our species-at-risk exist in these remaining habitats. Most of the province’s remaining grassland region is held in private lands, so a project like Operation Grassland Community, which targets grassland species-at-risk stewardship on private lands, is well suited to this pressing conservation issue. Once people learn about the diversity that exists around us all, a deep sense of care and stewardship often follows and leads to better conservation outcomes. Working to help nature is a win-win.

THE AWARD

This award is presented to a Canadian Wildlife Federation affiliate, its clubs or its members for the most outstanding conservation project in the previous year. It honours the memory of a former CWF director, C.H.D. Clarke, who devoted his career to wildlife management.

JAMIE WETRADE-STEVENSON

CHE-SEY HAWKINS - BLACK SHUTTER MEDIA