



Ontario Nature honours conservation heroes

RONA, Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, Thames Talbot Land Trust, and residents of Peterborough, Washago, Kingston and Orillia recognized for leadership in conservation and nature protection

(Southampton, Ontario, June 1, 2009) – This weekend, Ontario Nature acknowledged the contributions of individuals and organizations to the protection of natural habitats through program development, education and leadership.

Naturalists from across Ontario gathered at the Bruce County Museum in Southampton for Ontario Nature's 78th Annual General Meeting and Conference. A highlight of the weekend was the presentation of the Ontario Nature Conservation Awards. The Ontario Nature event was coincident with the Huron Fringe Birding Festival.

Ontario Nature gave out eight Conservation Awards:

The Steve Hounsell Greenway Award – Thames Talbot Land Trust

Awarded to an individual, group or organization who add a vital linking piece to the Greenway, preserve a core area, or build public support for preserving a natural heritage system, or lay the groundwork for a substantial legislative advance for greenway planning, or fight to restore a watershed, or any other action that contributes to the Greenway vision.

The first winner of Ontario Nature's new Steve Hounsell Greenway Award is the Thames Talbot Land Trust for outstanding leadership in preserving the 148-hectare Joany's Woods which serves as a green corridor along the Ausable River close to Pinery Provincial Park. The Trust's effective fundraising campaign and public outreach built strong local support for preserving this large forested property, featuring Carolinian and rare species. By preserving Joany's Woods, one of the few provincially significant forests in Middlesex county and part of an important watershed, the Trust has made a major contribution to Ontario's Greenway.

W. E. Saunders Natural History Award – Stewart Nutt

Awarded to an individual who has achieved a significant goal related to an aspect of natural history or natural science research, raising public awareness of natural history, demonstrating local leadership, saving a natural area, or generating conservation funds or publications.

Stewart Nutt organized and led a major effort to save endangered piping plovers nesting at Sauble and Wasaga Beaches. Nutt formed a motivated team of local volunteers to guard the nesting sites, brought the community on side, and attracted media interest in the plight of these small shorebirds. The plovers successfully fledged three young in 2007 and two more in 2008.

Ontario Nature Corporate Award – RONA

Awarded to a corporation demonstrating outstanding leadership or sound action in the environmental field and for protecting the natural environment either directly through corporate policies or through a major initiative(s), or indirectly through other undertakings that have stimulated significant environmental actions.

RONA received the Ontario Nature Corporate Award for leadership for developing a strong procurement policy for the wood products sold in its hardware and renovation stores. RONA gives purchasing preference to suppliers that share the company's commitment to sustainable

forestry. In 2008, RONA announced that 100 percent of the lumber sold in its stores must come from eco-certified sources by the end of 2010 and, by 2012, 25 percent of this lumber must bear the Forest Stewardship Council certification logo.

Carl Nunn Media and Conservation Award – Drew Monkman

Awarded to an individual, team or media outlet that has engaged in effective communication on one or more conservation issues.

Drew Monkman is an inspirational teacher at Edmison Heights Public School who, with his students, created a natural habitat for wildlife on the grounds of this Peterborough-area school. Monkman’s nominators felt his most significant impact has been through his popular weekly column, “Our Changing Seasons,” in the *Peterborough Examiner*, which reaches thousands of readers with his environmental and nature preservation message.

Richards Education Award – Diane Lawrence

Awarded to an individual who has succeeded in helping people understand the natural world and become enthusiastic supporters of conservation and environmental protection.

Diane Lawrence has been the inspiring volunteer coordinator of the Kingston Field Naturalists' youth program for 28 years. Lawrence plans activities that emphasize hands-on experience for both the Junior and Teen Naturalists, displaying an exemplary long-term commitment that has helped many young people become dedicated naturalists and professionals in the natural sciences field.

W.W. Gunn Conservation Award – Ron Reid

Awarded to individuals who demonstrate outstanding personal service and a strong commitment to nature conservation over a number of years with exceptional results.

Ron Reid received the prestigious W.W. Gunn Conservation Award for exemplary leadership in a long, illustrious career of nature conservation. Reid has served as Conservation Director for Ontario Nature, as a leader of the successful campaign to save the Oak Ridges Moraine and was the founding President of the Couchiching Conservancy. Reid also played an integral role in land protection on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. Reid is retiring next month as Executive Director of the Couchiching Conservancy, a leading land trust that now owns or manages more than 3,000 hectares of protected land in the Couchiching-Severn region.

Margaret and Carl Nunn Memorial Camp Scholarship – Robin Emms, Kids for Turtles

Awarded to youth who are 10-14 years of age, who display promise and interest in natural history interpretation or education and have the potential to take an increased leadership role in club programs.

Twelve-year-old Robin Emms has been an active participant in Kids for Turtles environmental education activities, and has a personal passion for monarch butterflies, 30 of which she has raised and released into the wild. Emms will attend Camp Kawartha's Nature Camp for four days this summer.

J.R Dymond Public Service Award – Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

Awarded to an individual or group who shows distinguished public service that resulted in exceptional environmental achievement.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation has multiplied its original provincial financing with private and public sector funds, and is attracting landowner donations in its efforts to preserve and protect the Oak Ridges Moraine. The foundation has become a model for developing community and stakeholder partnerships to protect the environmental values of the Moraine.

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For more information on the recipients, to arrange an interview, or for photos of the presentations, please contact:

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Ontario Nature protects wild species and wild spaces through conservation, education and public engagement. Ontario Nature is a charitable organization representing more than 30,000 members and supporters and 140 member groups across Ontario (charitable registration # 10737 8952 RR0001). For more information, visit www.ontarionature.org.