



2004 CONSERVATION PIONEER AWARDS

The Conservation Pioneer Award honours individuals who have contributed significantly to the conservation movement in Ontario. These prestigious awards are presented annually to five deserving individuals at the A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium, Ontario's largest environmental Symposium.



MALCOLM KIRK, Thornbury, Ontario, Nominated by: Grey Sauble Conservation Authority/Ministry of the Environment and Niagara Escarpment Commission

The people of Grey and Bruce Counties owe a great deal to Malcolm (Mac) Kirk. Through his efforts, many individuals are now owners of pristine woodlands, swamps, and headwater regions for major rivers, gorges, fens, lakes, islands, waterfalls, bluffs, and caves. These two counties attract thousands of nature lovers each year. Much of their love for this area can be traced back to the efforts of one devoted conservationist - Malcolm Kirk. Besides the numerous services he renders, Mac co-authored "Islands of Green", a book dealing with Natural Heritage Protection in Ontario. He has also written numerous articles on nature reserves, the Niagara escarpment, vanishing landscapes, and wetlands in various journals such as Soil and Water Conservation, Ontario Naturalists, Seasons, and professional forestry periodicals. Mac continues to be a driving force in location conservation issues such as land acquisition, lobbying for tighter escarpment control, woodlot protection, wetland protection, better land planning and most recently, water extraction.



PATRICK J. MCMANUS, Westport, Ontario Nominated by: Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

Mr. Patrick J. McManus served 11 years as Chairman of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority during his record 25 consecutive appointments by the former municipality of Bastard and South Burgess. As a result of his long career and his dedication to this community, Pat played a central role in the early growth and development of this Authority and as well as others in Eastern Ontario. Pat was always a strong advocate for "conservation by the people". He was always in the thick of things, championing the provincial body, seeing it as the only way to gain the critical mass and lobbying strength necessary to counter non-conservation interests. In his private life, Pat was equally forthright about the future of the Rideau Valley, environmental protection, and his favourite topic, outdoor education. The education building at the Baxter Conservation Area was named the P.J. McManus Interpretive Centre in 1990 because of Pat's life-long passion for teaching young people about the environment.



DR. DUNCAN SINCLAIR, Aylmer, Ontario
Nominated by: Catfish Creek Conservation Authority

It is difficult to summarize the activities of Dr. Duncan Sinclair, a true pioneer in Ontario Conservation. He has done so much in the areas of forestry, fisheries and wildlife at so many different levels. Primarily, we believe that his greatest strength has always been advocacy, because he has the ability to make things happen, setting a positive example through both action and commitment. Dr. Sinclair has committed more than 40 years of his life to Ontario Conservation. Through his own personal largesse and his influence in the private sector, Dr. Sinclair has ensured new sources of private sector funding to protect and rehabilitate sensitive ecosystems, particularly in Canada's most endangered region of biodiversity, the Carolinian Life Zone.



MARIA AND THE LATE PAUL HEISSLER, Frankford, Ontario
Nominated by: Lower Trent Conservation

Maria Heissler and her husband, the late Paul Heissler, have been active environmental stewards since moving to the Quinte area in 1953. Over the years, their farm along Cold Creek has become a model of wise land management and a testimony to their strong belief in conservation. Paul and Maria spearheaded the formation of the Cold Creek Improvement Association in 1989 with the intent of influencing their neighbours to follow their philosophy of land use. Paul, whose dream drove them both, and was most often credited with the drive in the couple's many environmental accomplishments. Maria, however, was the one who, with stalwart persistence, made key contacts and did most of the public speaking. Since his passing in 2002, Paul has been remembered as an avid environmentalist who truly made a difference in the world around him. The Heissler couple planted thousands of trees and influenced many with their ideas on wise land use. Their dedication to protecting the environment is the legacy they share with us all.



DAVID CRESSMAN, CITY ???, ONTARIO
Nominated by: Soil and Water Conservation Society - Ontario Chapter

Dave Cressman has been an important figure in the advancement of conservation principles and practice in the Province of Ontario. He has devoted his professional life and much of his volunteer time to promoting conservation ethics and the interdisciplinary approaches to understanding environmental issues and to seeking out effective solutions. Dave has been a mentor to many young professionals including many agricultural and environmental specialists who may be found in a variety of positions across Canada.

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