

**Remarks for Len Ugarenko  
Presentation of WHC's 2009 Stewardship Awards  
National Stewardship Conference, Calgary, Alberta  
July 11, 2009**

- Hello, everyone. It's a pleasure to be here in Calgary.
- I'm Len Ugarenko, President of Wildlife Habitat Canada.
- For more than a decade, Wildlife Habitat Canada has presented national stewardship awards to honour Canada's stewardship leaders.
- We started this tradition in 1998, with the creation of the Forest Stewardship Recognition Program.
- Then in 2000, we established the Countryside Canada Recognition Program to recognize outstanding stewardship on Canada's agricultural lands.
- Over the years, these awards have honoured the contributions of individuals, organizations and industry.
- These stewardship awards help provide motivation for the continual improvement of resource and land management practices across Canada.
- In this way, WHC's Forest Stewardship and Countryside Canada awards are contributing to the improved health and abundance of Canada's wildlife habitat.

- Today, I have the privilege of presenting our 2009 awards — three awards for forest stewardship and three Countryside Canada awards.
- For each presentation, I will announce our award winner and give a brief description of their stewardship contributions.
- I will then call the recipients forward to make our presentation. And I would like all of our award winners to remain here at the front for photos following the presentation.
- I'll begin with our Forest Stewardship award winners.

## Forest Stewardship Recognition Award:

### **1. Galiano Conservancy Association**

Galiano Island, B.C.

Founded in 1989, the Galiano Conservancy Association is one of B.C.'s oldest community-based conservation land trusts. During the past 20 years, the association has been the island's strongest proponent of stewardship, focusing on the protection and restoration of local natural areas.

The association's Ecologically Conscious Neighbours Program has resulted in stewardship agreements to ensure that ecological health and the needs of wildlife are fully considered in every land-management decision for more than two dozen properties. The association is also working to conserve one of the largest mature forest ecosystems on the island — a 120-acre stand of Douglas fir.

Through such efforts, the Galiano Conservancy Association has played a key role in promoting a sustainable community and natural environment on Galiano Island.

- Dr. Ken Millard is representing the Galiano Conservancy Association. Dr. Millard, please come forward and accept the Forest Stewardship award.

## **2. Donna Cansfield, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources**

Toronto, Ontario

As part of the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign to fight climate change, the Ontario Government announced in August 2007, that it would fund the planting of 50 million trees across the province by 2020. The Honourable Donna Cansfield, Ontario's Minister of Natural Resources, has been instrumental in delivering this bold and precedent-setting initiative.

As well as helping to sequester carbon and fight climate change, the tree planting program will significantly enhance and diversify southern Ontario's wildlife habitat. For these and other far-reaching aims, the U.N. has recognized Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program as the most ambitious project of its kind in North America.

- Unfortunately, Minister Cansfield is unable to attend.

### **3. Elmer, Peter and Andrew MacKay**

Lorne, Nova Scotia

The MacKay family of Lorne in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, can claim a stewardship heritage that spans five generations. Managed for multiple uses by Elmer MacKay and sons Andrew and Peter, the well-known MacKay woodlands are the living proof of decades of careful forest management.

Since retiring from public service in the early 1990s, Elmer MacKay has overseen the planting of more than one million trees as he continued the work of his father — restoring old pasture land to forest, managing and tending forested areas and ensuring the overall sustainability of his family's woodlands for generations to come. In the present generation, Peter and Andrew have assisted their father, and they both take special pride in working in the woods as their grandfather and great-grandfather did many years ago.

Today, magnificent plantations of spruce and pine reflect the vision of the elder MacKays and the family's continued belief that our natural wealth cannot be taken for granted but needs our special care and dedicated stewardship.

- Unfortunately the MacKay family are unable to attend.

## Countryside Canada Stewardship Awards:

### **1. Land Stewardship Centre of Canada**

Edmonton, Alberta

For more than a decade, the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada has been a driving force behind stewardship in Alberta and one of Canada's most trusted and respected stewardship organizations.

Working with individuals and organizations, the Centre's diverse partners — resource industries, government, NGOs, First Nations, academia, land-use planners, developers, environmentalists and grassroots stewards — have joined forces to build a strong, supportive base for stewardship.

One of the Centre's most conspicuous and influential successes is their website [www.landstewardship.org](http://www.landstewardship.org) — an outstanding specialized online resource for environmental stewardship.

Throughout the years, the Land Stewardship Centre's underlying strength has been the recognition that the needs of both landowners and agricultural producers must be accommodated if stewardship efforts are to succeed.

- Pamela Wight, Director on the Board of the Land Stewardship Centre in Edmonton is here today — please come forward and accept the Countryside Canada award.

## **2. Dylan and Colleen Biggs**

TK Ranch, Alberta

Dylan and Colleen Biggs produce organic beef on their TK Ranch in east-central Alberta. In doing so, they share the fundamental belief that to be truly organic, a ranch or farm must operate sustainably and provide protection for wildlife and habitat.

The Biggs' 8,000-acre ranch is part of the Northern Fescue Grasslands — an area of native prairie recognized as an endangered ecosystem by the World Wildlife Fund. Only about five percent of Alberta's native prairie grasslands remain, and these sensitive areas require special care to support sustainable agriculture. Through their innovation, determination and a deep commitment to stewardship, Dylan and Colleen Biggs have established themselves as leaders in operating a successful ranching enterprise while caring for this fragile ecosystem.

- Dylan and Colleen Biggs please come forward and accept the Countryside Canada award.

### **3. Ernie Ewaschuk**

St. Albert, Alberta

Ernie Ewaschuk has dedicated most of his professional life to land stewardship, with an outstanding record of leadership.

Ernie has served on numerous boards, associations, working groups and committees — provincially and nationally — and he has worked on a wide range of initiatives on wildlife conservation, watershed protection, sustainable woodlot management and sustainable land use. Among his many achievements, he is a founding member and Executive Director of the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada, which is also being recognized this year by Countryside Canada. Ernie has also played a key role in establishing the Alberta Stewardship Network to connect and strengthen the province's stewardship community.

With over 40 years in conservation and environmentalism, Ernie has been a steward of the land long before the term became popular, and he has set an outstanding example of how to build a strong, more cohesive stewardship community, not only in Alberta but across Canada.

- Ernie Ewaschuk, please come forward and accept the Countryside Canada award.
- Again, please join me in recognizing the 2009 WHC national stewardship award winners [applause].
- Thank you.