

Carolinian Canada Conservation Awards 2015

Every year we celebrate conservation heroes and the work they do in Carolinian Canada. The significant accomplishments of our 2015 award recipients have benefited nature in Canada's Deep South. Carolinian Canada Coalition is excited to recognize the great work of these ten deserving recipients.

INDIVIDUAL	<p>Al Driedger</p> <p>Al is a dedicated land steward and volunteer who has contributed immensely to the protection of environmentally significant properties managed by the Thames Talbot Land Trust. Al has made significant contributions to the area of conservation— he and his wife Lilianne donated 73 acres of natural habitat to the land trust in 2009, he gives his time to workday events and he serves on the board for TTLT.</p>
	<p>Grant and Mary-Ann Harvey</p> <p>For the past 12 years, Grant and Mary-Ann Harvey have planted trees, installed bird boxes and created tallgrass prairie on their farm near Tillsonburg. In 2014, they volunteered their 57-acre property for survey by Carolinian Canada staff and volunteers as a contribution to the Elgin Natural Heritage Inventory project. The Harveys believe in knowing what you've got before it's gone – it can be a starting point for improving habitat for species whose populations are dwindling.</p>
YOUTH	<p>Danika Bax</p> <p>Danika has been working to improve awareness and build stewardship towards native pollinators. Specifically focusing on the Rusty-patched Bumble Bee (<i>Bombus affinis</i>), Danika raised \$1700.00 towards the purchase of native pollinator trees and shrubs and arranged a volunteer planting event in the spring of 2014. Danika has also done outreach initiatives in parades, at the Pinery Provincial Park and other community events.</p>
YOUTH PROGRAM	<p>Jackie Ryan</p> <p>Jackie has successfully moved from a "vision" of child initiated environmental conservation and restoration as articulated by <i>Asociation para la Ninez y su Ambiente</i> to "engagement" and "execution" in the Carolinian Life Zone.</p>
GROUP	<p>Essex Region Conservation Authority</p> <p>Over four decades of conservation efforts and activities, ERCA has planted more than 6 million native Carolinian trees and protected over 4,000 acres of habitat. They work with hundreds of landowners to implement these projects each year, and engage over 2500 volunteers annually in their tree planting and restoration efforts. They also provide significant education and outreach to create a knowledge-base about our region's native Carolinian species, hosting more than 40 stewardship events and providing curriculum based environment education programs to over 8,000 students each year.</p>

GROUP PROGRAM	<p>Delaware Nation - Weelateéxung “The Good Path” Nature Trail</p> <p>The Weelateéxung Nature Trail is a new 1.8 km walking path that showcases the natural beauty of local flora and fauna while raising awareness about Species at Risk. The trail, which meanders along the Thames River through giant stands Black Walnut, American Sycamore, Common Hackberry and Eastern Cottonwood, is considered to be one of the region’s finest among local hiking enthusiasts and nature lovers. The trail is open to the public. In coming years, the trail will continue to grow in length, bringing education and awareness to the cultural and ecological diversity in this region of the Carolinian Zone of Ontario</p>
	<p>Lambton Shores Nature Trails</p> <p>In partnership with conservation-minded landowners and others, the LSNT team of volunteers built and/or upgraded natural hiking trails, installed trail signage, built ATV-barriers and re-naturalized disturbed areas on some of the most environmentally sensitive lands in Lambton Shores & Vicinity (LS&V) beyond the boundaries of Pinery Provincial Park and the Rock Glenn CA. 30 km of ‘blazed’ nature trails now allow hikers to safely access and enjoy six better-protected ‘Gems of Nature’ totalling some 1200 acres.</p>
	<p>Woodland Garden - Garden Club of London</p> <p>The Garden Club of London has been restoring an area of woods between Wonderland Road and the Civic Garden Complex to a Carolinian forest since 1990. The Woodland Garden, once a meadow unused and unappreciated for all its potential, is a restoration project of native and Carolinian plants, designed, developed and maintained by a Garden Club Committee. Schools are invited to participate in clean-up days as part of a mentorship programme to nurture civic responsibility and pride.</p>
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT	<p>Rob and Eleanor Ward</p> <p>Robert and Eleanor Ward are Elgin Natural Heritage Inventory landowner volunteers who have been a organic farmers since the early 1970s, before organic farming was even really part of the public lexicon. The Wards enthusiastically steward imperilled grassland birds, such as Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark, in their pastures. The native forests and wetlands on their property are host to other Species at Risk as well, such American Chestnut, and quite possibly American Badger. The Ward family has planted trees, and hosted naturalists, birdwatchers, bird banders from the Hawk Cliff, as well as land trust staff, in their efforts to conserve nature while operating a sustainable farming business. Mr. Ward wants to see his farming practices sustained long beyond his lifetime and is concerned about the impacts large-scale agribusiness is having on the environment and the farming industry generally in southwestern Ontario.</p>

Chair's Award	<p>Peter Cloud Sr.</p> <p>Peter Cloud has coordinated the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation Species At Risk project for the past four years. The project has been a great example of multi-partner collaboration for an environmental cause. The overall purpose of the project is the protection of our environment and the native species within it, and to remove the invasive species that disrupt the natural balance of our local ecosystem. "We have been given a great responsibility to care for our earth and community, and we will continue to do so." A big part of the project's ongoing success can be attributed to Pete Cloud's leadership skills and his ability to inspire project participants from within and beyond the Kettle and Stony Point community.</p>
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