

Michael Fralic is
the 2024 Roderick
Haig-Brown
Award winner

More
Canadians
than ever
are getting
involved
in helping
conserve
our wildlife.
We salute
this year's
deserving
recipients of
CWF's annual
conservation
awards

Our heroes



ROBERT BATEMAN AWARD

Harrison Burton

Pine Grove, Nova Scotia

In a salute to an extraordinary artist and nature lover, this award recognizes those who, through artistic expression, deepen our awareness and appreciation for the conservation of Canada's wildlife and their habitats.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Telling stories about freshwater ecosystems has been something I've always been passionate about. In 2020, I started scouting lakes across the entire Atlantic region, with the goal of conducting a scuba diving expedition and filming the experience to inspire others to explore and care for fresh water. When I found Nictau Lake, it spoke to me in a way I still struggle to articulate.

Some of these lakes and rivers are steeped in history while simultaneously hiding secrets about their biodiversity. It's my belief that visual storytelling and dive exploration like the work we conducted in Nictau Lake are key steps in inspiring people to both care about and act on protecting these natural spaces.

Freshwater ecosystems are abundant in Canada, yet we largely neglect and take for granted their health and importance. My long-term hope is to inspire our government through film and photography to develop a branch that actively studies and protects freshwater ecosystems in Canada. Currently there are very few resources dedicated to fresh water.

WADE LUZNY YOUTH
CONSERVATION AWARD

Adrea Reykdal

East Selkirk, Manitoba

This award, renamed in 2016 in honour of a much-admired CWF executive director, recognizes Canadian youth who have undertaken wildlife or habitat conservation projects and activities that have helped make a difference to the environment.

WHAT THE NOMINATORS SAID

Adrea has been with CWF's WILD Outside conservation program for youth ages 15 to 18 since January 2021 and has consistently shown up and been enthusiastic, whether it is removing black knot at Fort Whyte, picking up trash at several shoreline cleanups in Winnipeg and Lockport or conducting bird surveys like the Canadian Nightjar Survey and the Nocturnal Owl Survey. She has also transplanted seedlings, dissected owl pellets for research and more.

Adrea's passions include ice fishing, camping, hunting and helping wildlife out when she can.

IN HER OWN WORDS

My parents were the ones who introduced me to nature. I was going camping by the time I was six months old. Since then, I have loved being outside. I learned from them how to pitch a tent, start a fire and other essential skills that allow me to be able to relax because I know I have the skills to survive. Now, I have my bird feeders and garden that I love to take care of, and I have my Papa and Grammy to thank for those habits.



“My grandfather shared his love of plants and birds with me when I was small. Wildlife and nature give me an overall sense of calm and freedom. There is no feeling that compares to waking up by a lake and hearing birds as you watch the sunrise. You have time to be curious without the pressure of being wrong — a beautiful environment for learning.”

AARON MCKENZIE FRASER

DWAYNE LARSON



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 “Being outdoors has always been very important to me. When I was a child, my parents and grandparents gave me lots of opportunity to be outside and to experience nature. Now, I enjoy doing wildlife photography, which has also added to my appreciation of nature. I would tell anyone interested to give environmental work a chance. It is a great opportunity to learn, to create community and to protect nature.”

KOVANNI PHOTOGRAPHY

WADE LUZNY YOUTH CONSERVATION AWARD

Brayden Chatlain

Victoria, British Columbia

This award, renamed in 2016 in honour of a much-admired CWF executive director, recognizes Canadian youth who have undertaken wildlife or habitat conservation projects and activities that have helped make a difference to the environment.

WHAT THE NOMINATORS SAID

Brayden has been acknowledged by both WILD Outside, CWF’s conservation program for youth ages 15 to 18, and the Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea for his dedicated volunteer service in giving back to local habitats and species. Despite his young age, Brayden has already completed a substantial amount of volunteer service with the WILD Outside program as well as weekly commitments at a not-for-profit learning centre and aquarium and, through his school, ongoing habitat restoration work. Through these experiences, Brayden has developed an interest in marine conservation and plant identification, specifically using iNaturalist Canada.

Brayden is an engaged and dedicated volunteer who is involved in conservation initiatives, giving back to local habitats and species. An extremely curious and inquisitive young adult, he demonstrates a keen interest in learning about nature.

CHRIS DONOVAN



STAN HODGKISS OUTDOORSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

Heather Fraser

Stilesville, New Brunswick

Since 1975, this award has been presented to a Canadian who has demonstrated an active and enduring commitment to conservation. It is named in honour of CWF’s founding president, Stan Hodgkiss.

WHAT THE NOMINATORS SAID

Heather has a remarkable 40-year career in forestry, fish and wildlife, and environmental management. She taught outdoor science-based education for more than three decades. She managed 6,000 hectares of forest for the City of Moncton and developed a model watershed stewardship program. She collaborated with private landowners and large corporations to conserve and protect natural resources. She built and ran the only municipal sugar bush operation in Canada, where she has educated thousands over 22 years.

An avid hiker, biker, camper and fisher, Heather lives and breathes sustainability and the conservation and protection of all natural resources. She is passionate about engagement.

IN HER OWN WORDS

It all started when I was two. My grandfather loved the outdoors and taught me all he knew about the forest, ecosystems, wildlife, water, flora and fauna, and so much more. His passion led me to my career in forestry, fish and wildlife, and environmental management. All these teachings that he learned from his father and grandfather were shared with me in stories and memories he had from the forest.

With technology becoming so popular among young children, I feel an obligation to get more students outdoors learning science. I have been teaching outdoor science-based education for decades and have seen the different opportunities nature gives children of all ages to learn and thrive.



RODERICK HAIG-BROWN AWARD

Michael Fralic

Brooklyn, Nova Scotia

Honouring one of Canada's great writers and conservationists, this award is presented to an individual or group for making a significant contribution to furthering the sport of angling and the conservation, development and wise use of Canada's recreational fisheries.

WHAT THE NOMINATORS SAID

Michael has long been a champion of restoring Medway River to its former salmon fishing glory. Over the years, he created many initiatives to clean and reclaim pools and monitor water quality, even organizing the fundraising, acquisition and installation of two fish wheels to facilitate needed study of the local salmon in the river. He has worked hard to protect the distinct genetic imprint of the salmon species native to this river.

Michael has been able to engage with Acadia First Nation, the Nova Scotia Salmon Association, Dalhousie University, Acadia University, Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Medway River Salmon Association and many others in the effort to protect salmon in the river. His outreach to local businesses as well resulted in valuable fundraising for projects over the years.

I really have not run across anyone who has done so much with so little. If anyone deserves an award, it's him. It's definitely a labour of love for Michael.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

It is impossible to do nothing. There are lots of issues and problems, but there are solutions if everyone works together.

YOUTH MENTOR AWARD

Lisa Nadon

Breslau, Ontario

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

WHAT THE NOMINATORS SAID

With just shy of 100 hours dedicated to the WILD Outside conservation education program alone, Lisa goes above and beyond to create a safe space for youth and help them reach their full potential in the outdoors.

Lisa generously shares her passions with our groups and continuously strives to be a help to all. A great example are the many camp-skills events she helped organize to make backcountry camping more accessible to everyone. She conducted a map-and-compass event where she gave participants individual guidance in orienteering, and, at another, she packed a bag for a five-day canoe trip and let the kids poke through, providing inspiration and information for their own trips in the future.

IN HER OWN WORDS

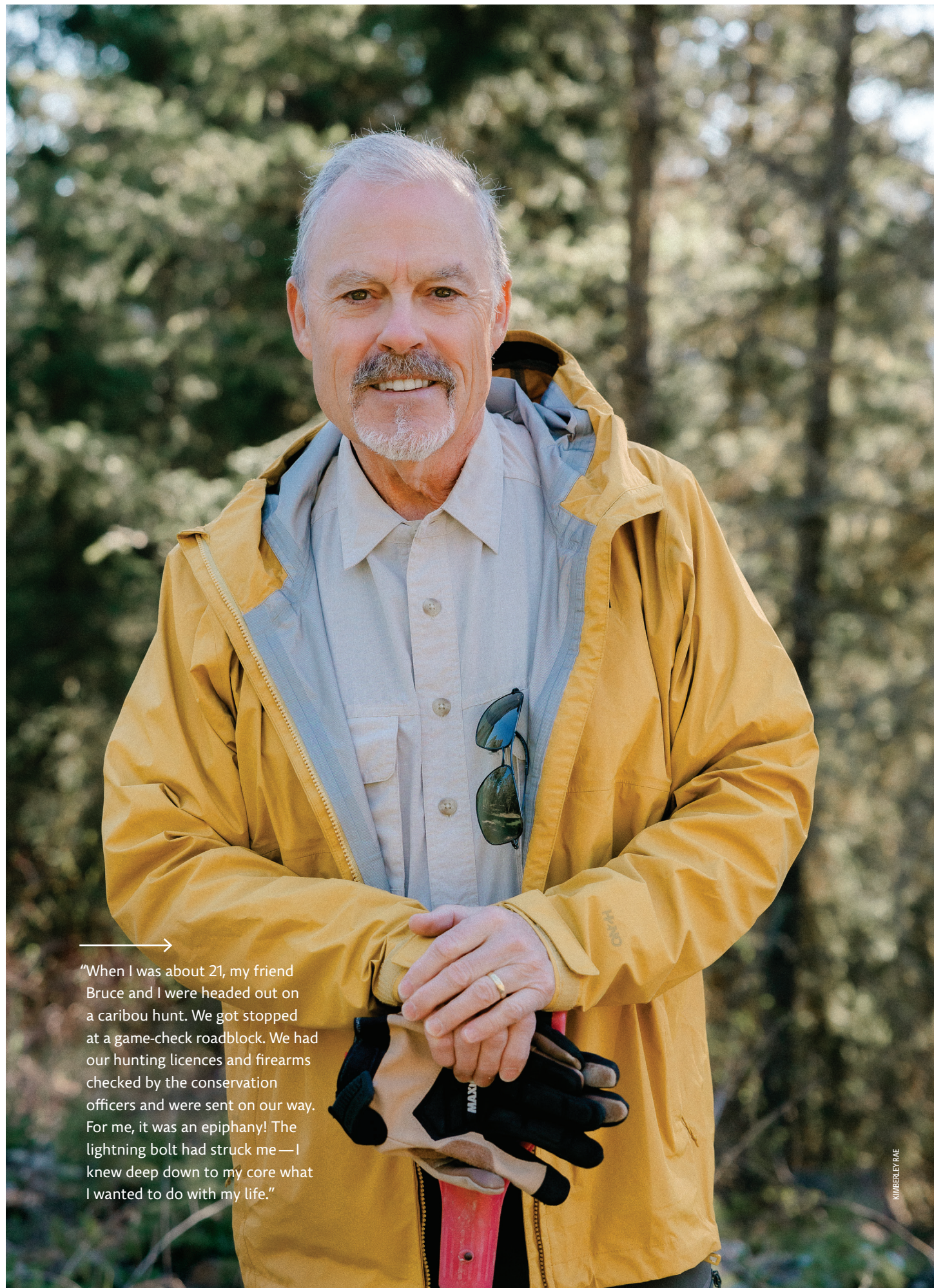
I love educating youth about nature. I love learning from them as well. Volunteering helps the community in countless ways. All the while, we each learn and grow ourselves. Thanks to our WILD Outside group — you are all amazing! Thank you, too, to the Canadian Wildlife Federation for this program and the huge impact it has had on our community.

AARON MCKENZIE FRASER



JOEL RODRIGUEZ

← Lisa is a volunteer with WILD Outside, Trees for Woolwich, her local trail association and more



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“When I was about 21, my friend Bruce and I were headed out on a caribou hunt. We got stopped at a game-check roadblock. We had our hunting licences and firearms checked by the conservation officers and were sent on our way. For me, it was an epiphany! The lightning bolt had struck me—I knew deep down to my core what I wanted to do with my life.”

KIMBERLEY RAE

**ROLAND MICHENER
CONSERVATION AWARD**

Ben Mitchell-Banks

Invermere, British Columbia

Established in 1978 by the Canadian Wildlife Federation as a tribute to the former governor general and avid outdoorsperson who also served as honorary president of the CWF, this award honours those who promote, enhance and further the conservation of Canada's natural resources.

WHAT THE NOMINATORS SAID

Ben had a distinguished career in uniform, undercover and in the senior ranks of the British Columbia Conservation Officer Service and Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, in both domestic and international enforcement.

One day in the field, Ben came across a man and his young son fishing in a closed area. It was a gorgeous day, a perfect one for fishing, except the dad did not have a fishing licence. Ben discreetly suggested he come by the conservation office the next day. The boy had no idea his father had just been charged with breaking the law. That's Ben: committed to conservation while recognizing the importance of respectful engagement.

In his decades as a committed volunteer, Ben has been a driving force in our community's efforts to restore traditional fish habitat and bring spawning salmon back to Abel Creek.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Ever since I was a young boy, I've been fascinated by the natural world. If there was a tree to climb, a puddle of water to splash in, a tiny stream or a thicket of bush, I would be immersed in it. When I was about six or seven, my father started to take me fishing, putting me on the path I ended up following during my life.

CHRIS DONOVAN



WILD EDUCATOR AWARD

Crystal Roberts

Minto, New Brunswick

Established in 2015, this award honours an exceptional WILD Education facilitator or instructor who has provided innovative and meaningful experiences for youth that focus on wildlife and the building of a conservation ethic. The CWF WILD Education program includes Project WILD and Below Zero.

WHAT THE NOMINATORS SAID

Passionate about land- and place-based learning, Crystal is always keen to help empower other teachers to integrate outdoor learning into their curriculum.

Crystal not only works to connect educators within her school district, but her willingness to take initiative extends as well to her local community, where she has supported a number of experiential learning initiatives in collaboration with local and provincial organizations.

IN HER OWN WORDS

One of my favourite moments as an educator is seeing a learner be inspired—that light-bulb moment where they connect and bring their own ideas and passion forward. When I was first introduced to Project WILD, I had that light-bulb moment for myself, and I was so excited to share it with others. It has been such a joy for me to play, discuss and learn with other educators.

My dad was my biggest mentor when it came to outdoor skills. We camped with the very basics, and I was always allowed to help with set-up, cooking and leave-no-trace principles. He also taught me to fish in summer and winter. I learned a lot from him about being safe in the wild and about how to work with nature to make the best of a situation, which has followed me well into my adult life.