
NATURE SASKATCHEWAN NEWS

NATURE SASKATCHEWAN'S VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD 1999

Presented to Garth Nelson,
Conservation Director of SNS.

The importance of the Volunteer of the Year Award, and its significance, are that, in an organization built and run primarily by volunteers, we choose to honour those people who have put time, energy, enthusiasm, skill and caring into their roles. It is they who lend so much credibility to our organization and carry forth our voice into the world.

Garth attended meetings all over the province. There were countless long hours in front of the computer composing electronic messages, letters, briefs and presentations, addressing everyone and anyone who would listen - and even those that would not - from the Prime Minister of Canada to provincial Premiers, CEOs, ordinary people and children.

He calmed fears, cooled passions when they threatened to divert us from our purpose, and raised our awareness on a host of issues.

He worked diligently to develop controversial perspectives based upon consultation, knowledge and the latest information on topics from oil and gas exploration and development, biodiversity, and endangered species to climate change.

For five years, Nature Saskatchewan has been privileged to share in the quiet strength, decency of character, integrity of spirit and a conviction of principles Garth carries so well.

(Excerpts from the presentation made by Nature Saskatchewan's Past-President, Kathleen Donauer, at the Fall Meet, in Regina, 2 October 1999.)

NATURE SASKATCHEWAN'S CONSERVATION AWARD 1999

Presented to John Dinius

Over many years, this individual has become well known to both the conservation and the hunting/outfitting communities through his unflagging efforts to bring about the end of bait hunting in this province. His arguments are based on principles of conservation and biodiversity, on the need for sustainable hunting of big game, on concepts of safety, fair play and ethics. His initial work in the RM of Paddockwood, where he lives, resulted in passage of a resolution against big game bait hunting, a resolution formulated after much research into the subject and its various forms in jurisdictions across the continent.

He was instrumental in 1994 in creation of the Fair Chase League, a group of primarily hunters and farmers from the forest fringe area who are opposed to the practice of bear and deer baiting. He is presently a director of the League and one of its most active spokesmen.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with what has been his major issue, whether one accepts his stance or his conclusions, his energy and commitment are compelling. His spirit and dedication and his commitment to nature and the ethical treatment of wildlife can be models for all of us.

But this is in no way John's only face...each year he and his wife Margie

feed over 1000 pounds of sunflower seeds—and numerous other offerings—and they are known widely for the many initiatives they take to provide habitat for dozens of resident and transient bird species. They have put over 35 km of bluebird trails in their community. John has also set up a bluebird project, and constructed and installed bluebird houses in Weyerhaeuser Canada's forest seed orchard. In the process he has become "bird advisor" to the company, thus ensuring that both staff and visitors become more aware of wildlife and wildlife issues. In cooperation with Nature Prince Albert, he and neighbours have constructed and installed duck nests in area sloughs. He has personally contacted many people in efforts to obtain more bird records for little-explored map sheets for the Atlas of SK Birds.

These are some of the reasons why we have chosen John Dinius to receive Nature Saskatchewan's 1999 Conservation Award—he is one who personifies the individual spirit and commitment which fostered early naturalist activity in this

province and which brought this society into being 50 years ago.

(Excerpts from the award presentation made by Mary Gilliland at the Fall Meet in Regina, 2 October 1999. Photo (below) by Mary Gilliland.)



John and Margie Dinius, May 1999



“Of the corvids which hoard food, both the Yellow-billed and Black-billed Magpies are short-term hoarders, caching and recovering food either the same day or at most a few days later.”

T.R. Birkhead, *The Magpies*