



**Canada's Premiers Recognize Excellence in Water Stewardship
and Launch Enhanced Water Information Website**

March 18, 2014 – Canada's Premiers today announced the recipients of the Excellence in Water Stewardship Award, a highlight of Canada Water Week. Presented to community groups, businesses, partnerships, and institutions in each province and territory across Canada, the award recognizes outstanding achievement, innovative practice and leadership in the area of water stewardship.

“On behalf of Canada's Premiers, I congratulate the recipients for their commitment to improving stewardship of our priceless water resources,” said Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, Chair of the Council of the Federation. “These organizations play a vital role in championing innovation, protecting water quality and promoting conservation.”

Each recipient receives a trophy, monetary prize and certificate signed by the Premier of their province or territory. This year's recipients are:

Southern Rockies Watershed Project – Alberta
Farmland-Riparian Interface Stewardship Program – British Columbia
Ducks Unlimited Canada – Manitoba
Five Fingers Brook Watershed Committee – New Brunswick
Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program – Newfoundland and Labrador
Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board – Northwest Territories
Groundswell Community-Based Groundwater Monitoring Ecology Action Centre – Nova Scotia
Community of Pond Inlet – Nunavut
Green Communities Canada – Ontario
North Rustico Sewer and Water Utility Corporation – Prince Edward Island
Groupe d'éducation et d'écovigilance de l'eau – Québec
Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association – Saskatchewan
Friends of McIntyre Creek – Yukon

As well, the Council of the Federation Water Stewardship Council announced today enhancements to its online water information sharing tool to provide better public access to water information and to support enhanced water stewardship across the country.

Canada's Water InfoStream, a single portal of water information from all provinces and territories, facilitates cooperation and sharing of information on water at the pan-Canadian level. Greater information sharing around water helps governments and organizations better understand trends, emerging opportunities, and the impacts of climate change and development.

Reflecting stakeholder feedback, the website now places greater emphasis on topics such as drinking water. Additional changes are designed to make *Canada's Water InfoStream* a valuable source for researchers, public policy makers, and people who wish to access water data and information relevant to their interests and needs.

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The Water Stewardship Council provides information and strategic advice to Premiers on key trends, emerging issues and opportunities related to water in Canada.

Further information about the Excellence in Water Stewardship Award can be found at www.councilofthefederation.ca. *Canada's Water InfoStream* can be found at www.councilofthefederation.ca/infostream.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Recipients of the 2014 Council of the Federation Excellence in Water Stewardship Award

Southern Rockies Watershed Project – Alberta

The Southern Rockies Watershed Project documents the effects of wildfire on hydrology, water quality, and stream ecology in the region. Initial research was led by Dr. Uldis Silins, professor of forest hydrology with the Department of Renewable Resources at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. This research has been recognized internationally as one of the leading studies of its kind. It was described by the Alberta Innovates Water Sustainability Program (an international scientific review panel) as "...the first major effort globally to provide a comprehensive assessment of forest disturbance impacts from *source to tap*". Over the past 10 years, research results have been published in international peer-reviewed scientific journals and have been presented at numerous international scientific conferences and regional partner/stakeholder events.

Farmland-Riparian Interface Stewardship Program – British Columbia

The Farmland-Riparian Interface Stewardship Program is designed to help provincial agriculture producers protect and enhance water quality and riparian vegetation, and prevent and mitigate agricultural impacts on streams and lakes. Established in 2004, the program furthers these objectives by increasing understanding and cooperation between agencies responsible for resource management and the agricultural community regarding farmland development and use; promoting joint planning of habitat restoration and farmland activities between landowners, resource management agencies, and community groups; raising awareness of interactions between land use and habitat values; and resolving conflict that may arise between resource agencies and landowners. The Program is recognized as a leader in promoting water stewardship through education, awareness and cooperation.

Ducks Unlimited Canada – Manitoba

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has implemented and evaluated water management programs for almost 75 years. DUC has developed considerable expertise related to wetland ecosystems, and their contribution to biodiversity, watersheds, human health, the community and the economy is substantial. DUC works co-operatively with landowners, producers and various government departments to promote sustainable management practices which restore, enhance and protect our wetland resources, which in turn improves the health of our rivers, reservoirs, lakes and watersheds. Every year, DUC provides education programs that reach over 30,000 students across Manitoba while another 50 elementary school classes are mentored by secondary school students from DUC's Wetland Centres of Excellence. Ducks Unlimited Canada is a private, not-for-profit registered charitable organization.

Five Fingers Brook Watershed Committee – New Brunswick

The Five Fingers Brook Watershed Committee (FFBWC) was formed in 2003 at the request of the Saint-Quentin Town Council. FFBWC is responsible for initiating the development and implementation of a plan to improve the drinking water supply in the Five Fingers Brook watershed. This plan has become an organizational tool for FFBWC, the municipality and area residents, and has helped the community to understand the physical state of the watershed, propose corrective measures, establish priorities for interventions, and prepare a budget. In addition, the plan includes a component of community education around water conservation. Examples of their actions include education in schools about the importance of watershed protection and water conservation, placement of water saving devices in schools, and recognition of the efforts of conservation-minded property owners who live along the watershed.

Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program – Newfoundland and Labrador

The Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program (NAACAP) is an environmental citizens' non-government organization on the Northeast Avalon which works with all sectors of the community, including all three levels of government, to protect and enhance the aquatic environmental quality of the watersheds and coastline within the ACAP project area. NAACAP has a long history of environmental stewardship from its origins in 1993 when it focused on the issue of raw sewage in St. John's Harbour. Today, NAACAP plays a major role in water quality monitoring throughout the Northeast Avalon, and is actively involved in public outreach activities and scientific studies, acting as a community advisor on watershed related matters, and partnering with various organizations to protect the aquatic environments of the Northeast Avalon.

Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board – Northwest Territories

The Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board (WLWB) works with communities to build local capacity for water quality monitoring in the Tłı̄cho region of the Northwest Territories. Communities are responsible for monitoring water quality under their water licences but capacity to do this monitoring is a challenge. To meet this challenge, WLWB trains Tłı̄cho community members in sampling procedures, results interpretation and other activities to attain monitoring requirements. This training increases communities' understanding of water quality issues and their ability to meet licence requirements. WLWB also supports other programs where community members learn how to assess whether water and sediment quality and fish health are changing over time. Offered through WLWB, these innovative, locally-focused and action-oriented programs better prepare Tłı̄cho communities for the future and are a model for community water stewardship.

Groundswell Community-Based Groundwater Monitoring Ecology Action Centre – Nova Scotia

Groundswell was created at the Halifax-based Ecology Action Centre in 2010 as a model of community-based groundwater monitoring. The project connects community groups with groundwater monitoring wells, and allows monitoring of local groundwater resources. Groundswell volunteers are groundwater stewards, lending their voices, knowledge and expertise to emerging campaigns to protect local groundwater. Through ongoing monitoring over time, Groundswell will provide water level information to community leaders to promote long-term drinking water sustainability. Recognized nationally as an innovative and effective model for groundwater monitoring, Groundswell allows the community to continually assess whether their drinking water is in good health (water levels steady or increasing) or in poor health (water levels declining), and make sustainable decisions for each aquifer.

Community of Pond Inlet – Nunavut

Located in northern Baffin Island, the predominantly Inuit community of Pond Inlet is working on a needs assessment project around building capacity to monitor fresh water quality in a changing climate. Working with community member, Tim Anaviapik-Soucie, and supported by researchers from the Dalhousie University Centre for Water Resources Studies, Nunavut Research Institute and ArcticConnexion, the research involves producing valuable baseline information on the microbial quality of drinking water sources in Pond Inlet, as well as documenting local knowledge, practices, and perceptions related to procurement of drinking water from traditional sources. The project is very important to the community as they need to gain an understanding of how changing weather or new activities is impacting their source water and to be confident that their water is safe.

Green Communities Canada – Ontario

Green Communities Canada works with homeowners, businesses and communities to reduce impacts of storm water run-off on lakes, rivers and streams. Green Communities Canada designed RAIN, an urban water management program that supports practical ways to reduce storm water run-off such as rain water harvesting, porous paving, dog waste composters, and rain gardens. Delivered in nine Ontario communities, RAIN has changed the way people in

these communities manage their storm water, based on the group's message to "Slow it down, soak it up and keep it clean."

North Rustico Sewer and Water Utility Corporation – Prince Edward Island

The North Rustico Sewer and Water Utility Corporation took progressive and forward-looking steps to improve its handling of wastewater by increasing capacity to meet future growth within North Rustico. Its system now surpasses new federal and provincial regulations for effluent quality, and the facility was relocated on higher ground to protect it from storm surges and the impacts of climate change. Increased capacity will enable people to discontinue use of septic systems, which will help protect the town's well field. Assuring the quality of effluent will also protect the shellfish fishery and aquaculture, and enhance enjoyment of the scenic harbour. This project provides an excellent example for towns across Prince Edward Island.

Groupe d'éducation et d'écosurveillance de l'eau – Québec

Groupe d'éducation et d'écosurveillance de l'eau (G3E) has developed, adapted and distributed environmental water quality monitoring programs and tools for the acquisition or transfer of knowledge, which has allowed 35,000 young people and citizens, 25 watershed organizations and 16 national parks located in more than 18 regions of Québec to get involved in water management. G3E encourages local communities concerned with the quality of their waterways to participate in various programs and to commit to the protection of their aquatic environment. G3E has established a network in Québec and encourages cooperation between schools, community organizations, government institutions, financial partners and community businesses to achieve the common objective of water conservation.

Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association – Saskatchewan

The Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association began implementing Agricultural Environmental Group Plans (AEGP) in 2009. AEGP allow all farmers in the plan area to qualify for financial assistance to implement beneficial management practices which protect water. The Association approved more than 1,400 applications and provided more than \$9 million in assistance for projects like seeding riparian areas to permanent cover, decommissioning abandoned wells and seeding perennial forage. The Association receives this award in recognition of the innovation they have shown in reaching out to landowners and selling the benefits of beneficial management practices, the impact on the watershed of the actions and the excellence shown in administration, promotion and delivery of the program.

Friends of McIntyre Creek – Yukon

Friends of McIntyre Creek (FOMC) is a volunteer, grassroots organization dedicated to protecting McIntyre Creek in Whitehorse. Since 2009, FOMC has been dedicated to maintaining the environmental quality of McIntyre Creek and ensuring that the needs of the wildlife and natural systems are balanced with recreational and environmental opportunities in the area. FOMC has contributed to the development and implementation of new trails and signage, installed interpretive panels, hosted a celebration walk and developed a new website to promote continued stewardship of McIntyre Creek.

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