

# EARTH DAY

## CANADA 2011

As seen in the April 25, 2011 issue of *Maclean's*

### HOMETOWN HERO PROTECTS SAFE PASSAGE FOR WILDLIFE

Long before Heather MacFadyen was named Earth Day Canada's 2010 Hometown Hero, she was an environmental hero to her peers. For years she has worked tirelessly to preserve and protect Alberta's spectacular landscape.

A third generation Albertan, Heather says she learned at a young age the importance of being "a good steward" to the land. When she and her husband bought a home in Canmore in 1992, she began to see the dangers urban sprawl posed to the nearby Bow Valley. There was one area in dire need of protection – the Three Sisters Corridor, which allows wildlife to travel safely between nearby Banff National Park and the Wind Valley. To this goal, she's applied an unswerving determination, and has gathered loyal supporters along the way.

Although Heather was busy with her academic career, a private psychology practice, while also sitting on various environmental boards, she co-ordinated public awareness meetings, petitions and letter-writing campaigns to protect the Three Sisters Corridor. She and her supporters began pressuring decision-makers to establish scientifically functional wildlife corridors over a 14-km stretch of land in the Corridor. In 2009 they organized a campaign that resulted in the Province of Alberta returning 57 acres of land, previously leased to a private developer, to the Bow Valley Wildland Park and the Wind Valley Corridor.

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WHAT PLEASES HER MOST ABOUT THE AWARD IS THE ATTENTION IT HAS BROUGHT TO THE BOW VALLEY AND THE 18 YEARS OF CONSERVATION WORK DONE BY THE LOCAL PEOPLE.

She's proud of the accomplishment, but her work in the Corridor isn't finished. "We're still waiting for the Province to stand behind the legal requirements of the 1992 Natural Resources Conservation Board and complete the last three kilometres of the Corridor, and apply the same scientific standards they did in 2003 and 2007. We're not sure why it hasn't been done yet, but we have public opinion and science on our side."

Heather has shared half of her \$10,000 Hometown Heroes award with volunteer groups Bow Valley Naturalists and Bow Valley Clean Air Society. But what pleases her most about the award is the attention it has brought to the Bow Valley and the 18 years of conservation work done by the local people. "I keep the best company in the world," she says of her fellow conservationists.

## FIGHTING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT ONE BATTLE AT A TIME

Mike Bell honed his skills as an environmental activist for 26 years when he worked closely with aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. In 2006, he "tried to retire" to Comox, BC on Vancouver Island, but instead became one of the community's strong environmental voices. His work earned him a spot as one of Earth Day Canada's 2010 Hometown Hero finalists.

When Mike, a full-time volunteer with the local Sierra Club, learned that the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) had approved an application for development of a gas station on the narrow, high-volume traffic road Dyke (Comox) Road, he was alarmed. "The site is in an ecologically sensitive area," he explains. "It's in an earthquake zone (a 1946 earthquake only 20 km away registered 7.3); it's on a floodplain and on highly unstable ground. It's also less than 60 metres from the feeding grounds of migrating salmon. It's an internationally recognized Important Bird Area for such species as the Trumpeter Swan, the second most important estuary for migrating birds in BC. It's also close to the K'omoks First Nation, which has great cultural and anthropological significance."

Mike and his fellow Sierra Club members quickly mobilized to collect 1,300 signatures from concerned citizens opposing the development. He wrote letters to the local media and made presentations against the CVRD's decision. He also helped convince the Sierra Club to sue the CVRD and the owner of the gas station in the BC Supreme Court. Although they lost the lawsuit last summer, Mike says some good came out of it. The Sierra Club won a temporary freeze on further industrial development in the area and is continuing the push for change to protect the estuary. "We lost, but it's not over," says Mike. "The K'omoks still have time to organize a legal challenge. We can still win this."

The reason for the loss, he says, is that the dearth of environmental laws in BC forced the Sierra Club to rely on the Municipal Act. "The court case didn't deal with any of our concerns," he said.

For now, Mike is gearing for the next challenge – the Raven Underground Coal Project. He calls it the biggest environmental threat ever faced by the Comox Valley and one that has global climate change implications.

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Corporate Knights



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THE STUDENTS WILL ALSO GROW PRODUCE THAT COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS WILL DELIVER TO LOCAL CHARITIES.



## THE LEGACY OF KARYNE

Karyne Maisonneuve was only eight years old when she died of cancer in 2006. Yet the legacy of this vibrant girl who loved nature lives on through Projet Karyne, a recipient of Earth Day Canada's Community Environment Fund.

After Karyne's death, her parents Carl and Mary Lou and their three children wanted a lasting tribute to the brave young girl. Carl says that while his family was always concerned about the environment, it was Karyne who turned them into activists. "We wanted to create something positive where her energy would shine forever. We didn't want a static monument, but one that moves and has purpose. Karyne was so close to nature. She loved going to our cottage and loved animals. So we decided to start Projet Karyne, that would focus on renewable energy and, at the same time, provide students with an educational experience," he says.

Carl and his wife approached the Gisèle-Lalonde High School in Ottawa, their children's school. A partnership was formed in October 2006 and they've never looked back. The first major project was to install a wind turbine and solar panels to provide energy at the high school. The students helped raise funds for the materials and now have a first-hand look at how

renewable energy is produced. Sponsors and volunteers also helped the projects become reality. Carl says although the turbine and solar panels provide only a small portion of the school's energy needs, they add up to one-third to one-half the energy needs of a regular-sized home.

The latest project, funded in part by Earth Day Canada's Community Environment Fund (sponsored by Sobey's Ontario), is a self-sufficient solar greenhouse to be used for biology, physics and geography classes at Gisèle-Lalonde. The students will also grow produce that community volunteers will deliver to local charities. The mud and straw bale walls will be erected this spring, followed by the installation of solar renewable energy components, such as a solar heater connected to a radiant floor to keep the greenhouse warm, and photovoltaic panels to generate electricity. Plants will be watered with collected rainwater to make it a completely sustainable greenhouse, in terms of heat, electricity and water. The goal is to begin growing later this year. "It's a discovery project," says Carl.

For more information about Projet Karyne and Gisèle-Lalonde High School's environmental initiatives, visit [www.projetkaryne.org](http://www.projetkaryne.org)

## INTRODUCING 'THE VEGEQUARIUM'



Justin Nadeau had a great idea – an aquarium that grows greens and can be built for \$39.

His Vegequarium, made from reused materials, made him a first-place winner of Earth Day Canada's 2010 EcoAction Challenge. His concept is based on aquaponics – the combination of aquaculture (raising fish) and hydroponics (soilless growing). By circulating the water from the fish tank through a hydroponic grow tray, you can grow fresh herbs and salad greens. The system creates a healthy environment for the fish and is water and energy efficient.

An urban agriculture and environmental educator at FoodShare, a non-profit organization in Toronto, Justin has designed other intriguing growing and energy systems. He's built The File A Sprout (a filing cabinet turned into a sprouting box), a pop can solar heater and native bee homes.

To learn how to build the Vegequarium, visit [www.earthday.ca](http://www.earthday.ca)

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## YOUNG ECOREPORTERS TELL IT LIKE IT IS

It's never too early to become an environmental activist, and Earth Day Canada's EcoReporters are well on their way. In its second year, the EcoReporters program involves six elementary schools from across the country. One class from each school was hand-picked by Earth Day Canada based on environmental accomplishments. The classes will produce eco reports, along with three environmental videos to be posted on the EcoKids section of EDC's website. To help them with this task, each class was given a digital video camera, courtesy of sponsor Sony Canada.

Amy Park and her grade 3 students at Heritage Heights School in DeWinton, Alberta, are among the chosen EcoReporters. She and her students won the 2010 Great EcoKids Challenge for raising money to buy a water well in Africa. Their first film, *Recycling Champions*, depicted how the school captured the Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation Award for three consecutive years, winning a total of \$7,500. In the second video, students show how they're eco-friendly at home. "The kids come up with their own ideas. Everyone in the class is involved, and is a valued team member," says Amy.

Clark Perry-Bater teaches grade 4 at Eagle Ridge Elementary School in Coquitlam, BC and was delighted to learn that his class would be an EcoReporter. They set to work making a documentary film about the salmon run at a creek near their school. The entire class was involved in the various tasks and the 20-minute film was edited down to two minutes and got views from as far away as Europe. The second film demonstrated how the students made unique objects with recycled materials. From cardboard, they created miniature golf courses, basketball courts and even a field hockey pitch. "The kids were more excited and involved than if this were a textbook exercise. It shows them what they can do in real life," says Clark.

To view the videos, visit [www.ecokids.ca/pub/ecoreporters/videos](http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/ecoreporters/videos)



ECOMENTORS ARE AGE 15-24, AND EDUCATE PEERS AND CHILDREN ABOUT POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS THEY CAN MAKE TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

## MENTORING FOR TOMORROW

Earth Day Canada's EcoMentors play a vital role in bringing along the next generation of environmental activists.

Kale Black, an enthusiastic EcoMentor for the past two years, has made environmental education his life. The 21-year-old Burlington, ON native is the youth representative at Burlington Green Youth Network (BGIN) and is in the midst of planning the organization's third annual Youth Environment Conference. In his part-time job, he works as a manager at a local McDonald's, where he's "spreading the eco-love". His goal is to "green" behind-the-counter operations with reusable cups for employees, paper recycling and a new compost program that would divert all food waste, fry waste, coffee grounds and eggshells. If the program's a success, he hopes to introduce it to other Burlington McDonald's restaurants.

Kale was instrumental in creating the first EcoMentors Train-the-Trainer session, and he's also helped train over 200 new EcoMentors. EcoMentors are age 15-24, and educate peers and children about positive contributions they can make to the environment.

He tells new EcoMentors how working with elementary school children is a bonus. "The kids are so enthusiastic. They love the games and challenges – they just soak everything up. I always tell new EcoMentors, 'do one workshop with kids and you'll be hooked'."

Although he seems to be working 24/7 on environmental initiatives, Kale puts it into context: "If you care about yourself, you care about the environment. It's the most selfish thing you can do."

To learn more about EcoMentors, visit [www.earthday.ca](http://www.earthday.ca)



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<sup>1</sup>Glass substrate size: 2.88m x 3.13m.  
<sup>2</sup>40" equivalent.

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Sharp Canada is a proud supporter of Earth Day Canada's EcoMentors program.



# NURTURING ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

The Toyota Canada Foundation in partnership with Earth Day Canada established the Toyota Earth Day Scholarship Program to help cultivate and nurture this environmental leadership. To date, 120 students have received \$600,000 in scholarships. Here are two 2010 recipients.

## STANDING UP FOR THE ENDANGERED BUR OAK

Jack Simpson of Fredericton has been an environmental advocate for as long as he can remember. "My dad is a biologist and got our family involved in stream cleanups and conservation projects," he says. Jack has also been a member of the Children's International Summer Villages' Eco-Group since age 10. An Atlantic regional winner of Toyota Earth Day Scholarship, the first-year University of New Brunswick student is a champion of the endangered Bur Oak tree.

When the Eco-Group discovered in 2004 that the native Bur Oak was at risk to urban development and agriculture, it approached the Canadian Forestry Service (CFS) for help. The Eco-Group got 300 trees and planted them in the Saint John River Valley and, at the same time, educated the community about the importance of the Bur Oak. Jack has led the initiative since 2008 and spearheaded collaborative partnerships with other environmental groups, including the

Scouts/Guides of Canada, 4-H and Nature New Brunswick. The goal was to extend the range by over 100 km and they have more than succeeded.

"So far, we've planted 600 Bur Oaks in the valley, and we're closer to re-establishing the tree to its natural range," says Jack. His latest initiative is an Adopt-a-Tree program, which provides planting instructions and an "adoption certificate" for your Bur Oak. For more information on the program, contact [buroak2010@gmail.com](mailto:buroak2010@gmail.com)

## MOTIVATING OTHERS HELP THEMSELVES

As part of her high school curriculum, Natasha Caminsky and two other students arranged to live with a host family in the Dominican Republic for six weeks. The purpose – to educate citizens about environmental activities that would improve their community. During her stay, Natasha lived in the small village of La Cervecería in San Pedro. She and her teammates made sanitation and health presentations to the villagers, then led community cleanups to

translate suggestions into actions. At first it was difficult getting the villagers to participate, but eventually people came to understand, Natasha recalls.

One of her first acts was getting donations of reusable shopping bags, which she gave to each family. "The people were proud to show that they were using the bags and making an effort. They started asking questions about what they could do to improve the environment and they were willing to listen to us."

Next, she and her team met several times with the local council and convinced its members to provide them with a mechanical shovel and trucks to remove garbage collected by the villagers. "They had no garbage pickup, so the garbage was piling up at a dump outside of the town."

One of the most touching moments for Natasha was when the workers at a sugar cane plant presented her team with a huge thank-you card and sandwiches to show their appreciation. "We'd done presentations on basic sanitation and they wanted to show their appreciation. This was huge because these people are very poor."

Now a second-year sciences student at University of Western Ontario, Natasha hopes to go back to the Dominican to continue her environmental work.



## NEW HOMETOWN HEROES AWARD CELEBRATES SMALL BUSINESS

Small Canadian businesses pushing the green envelope can now be recognized with a new award from Earth Day Canada and program sponsors Mill Street Brewery, RBC and Cascades. The winner of the Small Business Hometown Heroes Award will receive an all-expenses paid trip to attend any professional development opportunity in Canada focused on environmental sustainability or conservation. The award will be presented at Earth Day Canada's annual Gala on June 8th in Toronto.

Mill Street Brewery is a new sponsor of the Hometown Heroes program. "We saw what Mill Street has done to reduce the impact of their business internally and externally, and saw an opportunity to work together to recognize and celebrate the important role individuals, grass roots organizations and businesses are taking to reduce their environmental impact," said Jed Goldberg, President of Earth Day Canada.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE EARTH DAY CANADA GALA

**Date:**  
June 8, 2011

**Where:**  
the Drake Hotel, Toronto

**Contact:**  
For sponsorship information or for tickets, contact Keith Treffry at 416.599.1991 x107 or keith@earthday.ca



Toronto's coolest environmental event, the Earth Day Canada Gala sells out the Drake Hotel every year, hosting 500 leaders from the business, environmental and arts communities. Attendees enjoy a spectacular menu by world-renowned chef Michael Stadtländer of Eigensinn Farm, lively entertainment, and a chance to celebrate environmental leadership. This year, Sean Cullen will act as Gala Emcee, while Mark McKinney (Kids in the Hall) returns as Producer. Jean David, President and Owner of An Idea Whose Time Has Come Inc., and former VP of Marketing for Cirque du Soleil, will share his 'green' business insights. The Sadies, 2010 nominee for the CBC Radio 3 Best Live Act Bucky Award, will rock the stage and close out the show.

### THANKS TO EARTH DAY CANADA'S PROGRAM SPONSORS

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