

Ecological Gifts: Donor Profile



John Mitchell

Canadian Wildlife Service

Don and Ruth Bucknell

A Conservation Easement in Oxford County – Mud Lake

“We have always been very concerned about the loss of wetland and woodland habitat. Forty years ago we purchased a marsh and pond known locally as Mud Lake. Over the years we have enjoyed this property immensely and have added to its wildlife value with reforestation. It is designated a Provincially Significant Wetland and the property is also now a Managed Forest for Wildlife. Through a conservation easement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, it will continue to be preserved with absolutely no development of any kind allowed now or in the future, regardless of who owns the property, as the protection is registered on the property deed.”

RUTH AND DON BUCKNELL

Mud Lake isn't really a lake. With only a hectare of open water and over 50 green hectares of cattails, bulrushes and reeds, it's actually a marsh. Given that two-thirds of southern Ontario's original wetlands have disappeared, Mud Lake is representative of threatened wildlife habitat.

Thanks to a donation by Don and Ruth Bucknell, 45 hectares of Mud Lake and surrounding upland will remain in a natural state. In 1999, they donated a conservation easement through Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). A conservation easement is a legal agreement registered on the property title, in which mutually agreed upon covenants dictate allowed land-uses and activities. The easement holder, in this case the NCC, has a right and obligation to inspect the property and enforce the covenants.

The Bucknells continue to hold title to the land and are free to enjoy the property as

they have for the past 40 years. Under the terms of the easement they may continue their life-long tree planting efforts and provide nature study opportunities for local groups, such as Scouts and naturalists. When the Bucknells no longer own the property, the easement will ensure that it will not be developed or drained.

There is also a financial benefit. Landowners donating title to land, a conservation easement, or covenant can receive a charitable donation receipt. With the receipt, the donor can then calculate tax benefits and apply those benefits against 100

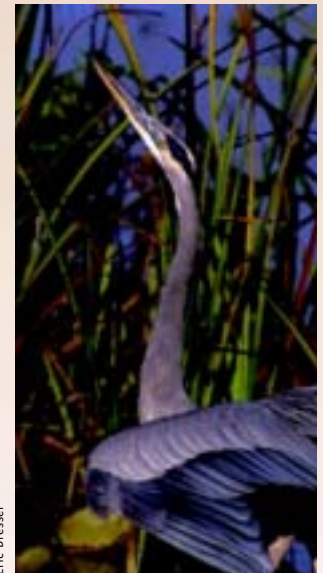
per cent of his or her taxable income; there are no donation limits, which generally apply to charitable gifts. And donors only pay tax on 25 per cent of the capital gains associated with the donation.

To find out more about making an ecological gift or about conservation easements, contact:

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Canadian Wildlife Service



Eric Dresser



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