



Environmental Studies Association of Canada
l'Association canadienne d'études environnementales

ESAC • ACÉE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The 2014 Winner of the Environmental Studies Association of Canada's *ECO*-Award Announced

ST CATHARINES, ONTARIO, CANADA – The Environmental Studies Association of Canada (ESAC) is pleased to announce the 2014 winner of its annual *Environmental Community Organizer (ECO) Award*. After an extensive review process, and with unanimous and enthusiastic support, the 2014 winner of the *ECO*-Award is **Mr. Dave Ireland, from Toronto, Ontario** (<https://www.rom.on.ca/en/collections-research/rom-staff/dave-ireland>).

Mr. Ireland is currently the Managing Director of the Centre of Biodiversity at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), where he unites his passion for conservation and biodiversity efforts with his commitment to public environmental awareness, launching well-received and powerful ROM exhibits such as *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* and the *Carbon 14: Climate is Culture Exhibit and Program Festival*. Before taking the position at the ROM in 2011, Mr. Ireland was the Curator of Conservation and the Environment at the Toronto Zoo, where he designed and delivered conservation education programs for the public. In addition to his professional positions, Mr. Ireland is also well-known and well-respected for his leadership in and founder of the Ontario Road Ecology Group (OREG), which he also Chairs, and for which this award honours him. The OREG works with multiple stakeholders to protect biodiversity from the threat of roads and traffic, and is a leader in bringing in ecological thinking to road design and management.

As his nomination form attested, “[Mr. Ireland’s] ability to bring the appropriate partners together to work towards a common goal makes him invaluable to the environmental community. His insight and foresight for big picture conservation initiatives and projects are matched by his ability and experience to develop them and see them come to fruition. In the field of environmental studies Dave is a leader and progresses the field by promoting and fostering partnerships that address important environmental issues at the government, academic and public level.”

This award was created by ESAC to recognize the outstanding contributions of individuals or groups who are working together to build partnerships and networks within the field of environmental studies, who increase environmental awareness through education and outreach, and who promote the mobilization of knowledge and research into action and practice. Mr. Ireland is an excellent example of these criteria. "For the conservation of biodiversity to be truly successful, we have to fully involve our diverse communities," says Mr. Ireland, "the problems we face are far too big for academics, governments, or businesses to manage on their own. I am honoured and flattered to receive the *ECO*-Award, but I certainly accept it on behalf of the hundreds, if not thousands, of dedicated professionals, educators, scientists and volunteers who make up the Ontario Road Ecology Group. I'm proud to lead this strong network, and am excited about our future plans in the national and international arena."

Winners are given a cash award of \$1000, a one-year membership to the Environmental Studies Association of Canada, including a subscription to *Alternatives Journal*, and are invited to be keynote speakers at the next year's Environmental Studies Association of Canada's conference.

"We are thrilled to announce Mr. Ireland as this year's recipient," states Ashlee Cunsolo Willox, ESAC Board Member and coordinator of the *ECO-Award*. "He embodies the criteria of this award, and stands as an inspiration for community-building, educational outreach, mobilizing research into advocacy, and environmental leadership. We were very impressed by the dedication that Mr. Ireland has shown to activities that support and perpetuate conservation initiatives across sectors, and by his commitment to public engagement and education. The Environmental Studies Association of Canada extends their sincerest congratulations to Mr. Dave Ireland!"

This year, given the quality of the nominations for this award, ESAC decided to create two honorary mentions to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of Mr. Don Wright, and Drs. Robert Boschman and Mario Trono. Don Wright of Lochlin, Ontario was hailed for his dedication to environmental education and public outreach through the conservation of his own property, and for his tireless work voluntarily educating youth on conservation and environmental issues in their own backyard. Robert Boschman and Mario Trono are being honoured for being the creators and driving forces behind the Under Western Skies conference, and are recognized for creating an engaging, diverse, and interdisciplinary gathering place for environmental studies professionals, scholars, activists, artists, communities, decision-makers, and students to engage in dialogue and promote environmental knowledge sharing and learning.

The awards will be given out on May 27th, 2014 at 5:30pm during the annual Environmental Studies Association Conference as part of the Congress for Humanities and Social Sciences in St. Catharines, Ontario.

For more information about the *ECO-Award*, please contact Ashlee Cunsolo Willox (ashlee_cunsolowilcox@cbu.ca) or visit www.esac.com. Media sponsorship and support for the *ECO-Award* has been kindly provided by *Alternatives Journal*.

About the ROM

Opened in 1914, the Royal Ontario Museum is Canada's largest museum of natural history and world cultures has six million objects in its collections and galleries showcasing art, archaeology and natural science. The ROM is the largest field research institution in the country, and a world leader in research areas from biodiversity, palaeontology, and earth sciences to archaeology, ethnology and visual culture - originating new information towards a global understanding of historical and modern change in culture and environment. For 24-hour information in English and French, please call 416.586.8000 or visit the ROM's web site at www.rom.on.ca. Tickets are available online at www.rom.on.ca.