



## Media Release

### Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre wins national award *"Watershed Legacy" recognized as best outreach program*

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, Man., June 26, 2007 –The Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre recently received national recognition for their Watershed Legacy project, taking home the 2007 Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC) award for Best Outreach Program.

"We're very honoured to receive this recognition," said the Interpretive Centre's general manager, Robert Laidler. "It reinforces the fact that the hard work of our wonderful staff and supporters has an important impact not only here at the Interpretive Centre, but also abroad. In just one year we've found innovative ways to share our programs with 20,000 people in over 100 communities otherwise underserved by this type of experiential education."

Between 2005 and 2006, the Legacy project visited 102 communities throughout the Hudson Bay drainage system, including many underserved remote, rural and culturally diverse areas in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northwest Ontario and the Northwest Territories. The Legacy team engaged youth, teachers and communities in creative programs and workshops exploring the importance of healthy, clean watersheds for people and wildlife.

Communities also got involved with water quality monitoring and a hands-on application of GPS/GIS technology. Students were encouraged to explore and map their watershed as a key component of Canada's natural heritage using these high-tech tools. Their information was then posted on a web-based map to share with the world (see [www.ducks.ca/ohmic](http://www.ducks.ca/ohmic)). The internet map and database creates an inspiring legacy for the community.

In addition to creating a watershed database for long-term use, the goal of the Watershed Legacy project is to initiate community involvement and awareness of water resources and the importance of healthy watersheds, including the role of wetland ecosystems.

With the help of generous partners, including TransCanada Pipelines, IBM Canada, local Conservation Districts, ESRI Canada, and the Department of Canadian Heritage, variations of the travelling education program will continue to be delivered. The 2007-2008 project is currently being assessed for funding.

The fifth annual CASC Awards were presented on June 9<sup>th</sup>, recognizing outstanding achievements in science and technology.

The Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre is a joint project of Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Province of Manitoba. The year-round conservation education and ecotourism facility north of Winnipeg fosters public awareness and knowledge of the inherent values of wetland ecosystems throughout North America. Through this work, the Interpretive Centre has been recognized with community, national, and international awards, including: Business of the Year, Tourism Association Industry of Canada (2006) Interlake Tourism Association's Sustainable Tourism Award (2006); British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow, Global Winner, Environmental Experience (2002), and more.

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