



**White Owl
Conservation
Awards**
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Awards Committee:
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JACK O'DETTE

Jack O'Dette is a metallurgical engineer at Alcan's Research Laboratory in Kingston, Ontario. Outside of his career, his interests have centred around conservation and environmental improvement for nearly 40 years. In fact, one of his early projects on joining Alcan after leaving university, was to form a conservation club at the company.

Conservation education directed to the sportsmen and the public at large has taken thousands of hours of Jack's time over the past 25 years. A wealth of knowledge on wise renewable resource management, obtained by reading, interviews, discussions and field trips with the wildlife and fishery biologists and foresters of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, has been passed on through a series of television appearances, lectures to home and school associations and talks to many and various conservation groups.

In order to better illustrate these talks he has prepared a series of over 1,000 colour slides on such subjects as Life of a Lake, Lake Reclamation and Restocking, Stream Improvement, Management Techniques for the Southern Deer Range, etcetera. These have had a tremendous impact on the public and the sportsmen in securing their support of good renewable resource management.

Jack initiated in the Kingston area a Lake Trout Shoal Improvement Program on Loughborough Lake which extended over three years and which now



appears to be the forerunner of the most effective means available of assuring the natural survival of this most vulnerable of all fresh water species. This technique is now to be adopted as a prime management tool for all of the Eastern and Central Regions of Ontario.

Jack's association with conservation clubs caused him to become involved in the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (O.F.A.H.) and he has been a director or executive officer of this organization from 1955 to the present. His term as President of the Federation saw it rise to its greatest membership and effectiveness in the cause of wise renewable resource management.

His involvement in a series of radio talks on the subject "How To Keep Ontario Fit To Live In" and his talk on "Our Forest Heritage" heightened his interest in forest recreational lands and in Algonquin Park in particular. On behalf of the O.F.A.H. he undertook a detailed study of the situation in Algonquin Park and prepared a brief on the Administration and Operation of Algonquin Park which O.F.A.H. submitted to the Ontario government. As a result of this brief, the government of Ontario initiated a study of the Park and prepared a Provisional Master Plan for the Management of Algonquin Park. This plan closely followed the recommendations in Jack's brief.

Other major conservation projects that Jack sponsored and lead in the O.F.A.H. include:

Canada Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit. He chaired the Migratory Bird

Committee that brought this idea forward and presented it to the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the Canadian government. He keenly appreciated the data collection potential of such a registration of hunters and its necessity if this valuable renewable natural resource was to be properly managed.

Lamprey Predation. He organized a survey of the streams of Eastern Lake Ontario to determine to what extent they were used as lamprey spawning grounds. This also led to his being the sportsmen's representative to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission at its meeting in Kingston. His concern with lamprey also got him involved in the fight to prevent the construction of locks at the Big Chute on the Trent Waterway that might allow the lamprey to enter this waterway from Lake Huron.

The Wolf Situation. The cry for the extermination of the wolf as the chief predator of Ontario's deer herds brought a tremendous effort on Jack's part to educate the public, by Conservation Workshops and other means, to the plight of the wolf, his role in the scheme of things, and the fact that he should be left alone. This position has now prevailed in Ontario.

Conservation Education. He has acted as Director of O.F.A.H.'s Conservation Workshop project for 14 years. The excellence of these workshops is appreciated Canada wide and is about to spawn similar projects in other provinces with Jack's help. A total of over 2,000 sportsmen have now become well informed conservationists as a result of attending these workshops.

As a strong supporter of unity amongst conservationists, Jack worked tirelessly toward the formation of the Canadian Wildlife Federation (C.W.F.) and the principle for which it stands. As a representative of Ontario in the C.W.F., he became an executive officer and eventually president. Under his leadership and during his term of office the C.W.F. came forward with "Learning About Environment". This important series of classroom texts and teaching aids is being accepted by the educational systems in many provinces.

Jack will probably be remembered as the man who lead the C.W.F. into litigation in the U.S. courts against the Secretary of the Interior of the United States with respect to the Alaska Pipeline.

First, the courts decided that Canadians had the right to intervene in the U.S. courts in actions that might affect our environment. In later court actions by the Appeal Court and the Supreme Court, the building of the Alaska Pipeline was brought to a complete halt. It may now only proceed with the enactment of new legislation that ignores the Environmental Protection Act and other considerations.

At present, as Chairman of the Arctic Resources and Transportation Committee of the C.W.F., Jack is trying to make sure that Canada at least takes a good look at the various means of moving oil and gas resources from the Arctic to southern markets and, in particular, by a modern high-speed railway.

Jack's present less strenuous involvement in both the O.F.A.H. and the

C.W.F. left him some additional time to be involved in environmental matters and, instead of taking a rest, he has now become more deeply involved in the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority as a representative of the City of Kingston and an executive officer of the authority. This spare time, if you can call it that, also got him involved in the Man and Resources Program at a local and regional level.

Jack's latest and perhaps most important contribution to conservation generally, as reported in the Toronto Globe and Mail on September 11, 1974, is in a pilot project that he is involved in, along with Ministry of Natural Resources personnel in the Brockville District, to bring a group composed of fifty naturalists and fifty hunters together in the Gananoque Wildlife Area for a couple of days to study habitat management as it relates to wildlife. It is hoped that this project will show the consumptive and the non-consumptive users of wildlife that they are both working toward the same end, namely, abundant supplies of wildlife.

Throughout his involvement in conservation projects through the years, Jack O'Dette has served to impress on many with whom he was involved, the importance of maintaining an environment that is suitable for the survival of our wildlife and fish. While his interests have been mainly directed towards the hunting and fishing fraternity, his efforts have brought to the attention of many thousands of Canadians the necessity of protecting and enhancing our environment.
