

# Culture of curiosity spawns 100% conservationist solution

ALBERTA DUO PROVIDE VISIONARY TEMPLATE FOR WATERFOWL AND WETLAND CONSERVATION

By Duncan Morrison

**A**S LONGTIME FRIENDS, FRED MANNIX AND Bill Turnbull have shared many conversations. And, as they will quickly confirm, their most memorable are often all about waterfowl and the conservation of the resource as they sit in the crisp air of a duck blind waiting for the next flight of ducks to wing by.

“Conservation by definition means wise use,” explains Mannix. “And, it all comes back to a culture of curiosity. If you have not got a curiosity as to why the ducks are doing things, it makes conserving waterfowl even more challenging.”



According to Turnbull, the pair knew of each other back around the late 1970s. But they first “talked about ducks” on the grounds of the Calgary Polo Club in 1981. They soon found out that even before their paths crossed, they shared a common link. Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) was distinctly intertwined through each of their families. The friendship further cemented as a result and the DUC bond remains strong in both men and their families. After all, DUC has been a part of their families’ heritage for years and both men are eagerly passing the tradition on to their own children.

“My desire to help DUC came early in my life,” says Turnbull, a Calgary businessman who served 24 years on the DUC board, including a two-year term as president from 1994 to 1995. “My dad was a DUC keeman for many years in Ontario. With me, it is all about the heritage and this component of my life fulfilled my passion to contribute.”



Above: Bill Turnbull, former DUC president (left), and Calgary businessman Fred Mannix flank the prestigious “Bert” McKee Wetlands Preservation Award that was recently awarded to Mannix for his efforts toward wetland habitat conservation. Left: Turnbull and Mannix say many of their best ideas come during conversations held while out in the marsh.

While not as involved in DUC operations as Turnbull, Mannix also has a long-standing and proud family history with the organization and credits his uncle and former DUC President Bob Kramer from Regina, as well as longtime family friend Art Mayne, as having a huge influence on both him and his father when it came to waterfowl conservation.

“DUC was a feature in our family from way back. It was my Uncle Bob that first got my father interested in DUC,” Mannix fondly recalls. “Once we got Dad going, it was easy to keep him going. It became a real family kind of thing.”

That included setting the stage for the financial support of the ducks that continues to this day.

“I remember I was 10 years old in the 1950s and my dad sending two cheques to Uncle Bob,” Mannix says, chuckling. “One was to the Regina Roughriders Football Team and one was to Ducks Unlimited.”