



**BISHOP'S**  
UNIVERSITY

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**Peter D. Curry**

Peter Duncan Curry was born in Copenhagen, Denmark and emigrated to Canada shortly thereafter. He was educated at Ridley College, Bishop's University (1931-34) and the University of Manitoba. He has been President of five major companies, including Power Corporation, Chairman and Director of six others and Director of nine more. Awarded an Honourary L.L.D. by the University of Manitoba in 1963, he was a member of the board of that university for six years, Chairman of the Board for six more years, and then Chancellor for six years. Since 1950, Peter Curry and his family have operated a 10,000 acre goose sanctuary on Lake Manitoba. He is credited with having restored the Canada Goose to the interlake region of Manitoba and is now involved in wetland ecology studies. For 23 years, he has been a trustee of the North American Wildlife Foundation and, in 1981, was the first Canadian ever to be elected President of the Foundation. In Canada, this foundation operates the Delta Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Station, an outdoor laboratory for the graduate students of over 60 American and Canadian universities. In 1988 Bishop's University awarded him a D.C.L. (honoris causa) degree. Today's inauguration of the Curry Conservation Project is a yet another tribute to his lifelong commitment to wildlife and education.

PETER D. CURRY

CONSERVATION PROJECT

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DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA, IN COOPERATION WITH BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY, CONSTRUCTED THIS WATERFOWL PROJECT IN 1990. IT IS DEDICATED TO PETER D. CURRY (BISHOP'S 1931-1934) IN RECOGNITION OF HIS GENEROUS SUPPORT OF BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY AND DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA'S WETLAND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS.

## BACKGROUND

In 1989, Bishop's University approached Ducks Unlimited Canada to establish a wetland conservation project on University grounds using a donation received from Mr. Peter D. Curry, a former student and longtime Ducks Unlimited supporter.

The site chosen for the project was located in the eastern section of Bishop's campus, adjacent to open countryside and near the St. Francis River. The quiet location, with its adjacent fields, proximity to wooded areas and to the river, offered a potentially attractive site for waterfowl and had the advantage of being situated close enough to the campus to provide an easily accessible and easily controlled field laboratory and observation area.



Prior to improvement, the site consisted of a hay field through which a small stream flowed to the St. Francis River. During snowmelt, a temporary wetland would be formed in low lying areas located along the stream. However, waterfowl use of the area was severely limited by the



rapid withdrawal of water with the spring runoff. Although interesting conditions existed for waterfowl during the spring migration and the pairing period, the quick disappearance of wetland conditions resulted in important limiting factors for the rearing of broods as nesting waterfowl would need to move to the next marsh once the wetland dried up. In suburban areas such as this one, brood-rearing sites are rare and broods are extremely vulnerable to predation as they travel in search of another wetland. The Peter D. Curry Conservation Project has created a permanent wetland for waterfowl.



## DEVELOPMENT

Topographical surveys helped determine the best location to establish the development of wetland conditions for dabbling ducks. A dyke and water-control structure were designed to keep a water level averaging 60 cm over the wetland, as past experience indicated that this water level would provide the best conditions to encourage the growth of desirable aquatic plants. This wetland habitat would provide an attractive site for invertebrate development and help establish needed brood-rearing habitat.





This wetland is expected to be especially successful for brood-rearing as it is located amidst fields providing good waterfowl nesting habitat.

To ensure that both wetland and upland habitats would be protected, Bishop's University, by agreement with Ducks Unlimited Canada, designated the three (3) hectares required for wetland development, as well as an additional eleven (11) hectares of surrounding uplands, as wildlife habitat. As a result of this agreement, these lands will be used exclusively for conservation, wildlife management and educational purposes at least until the year 2020.





## CONSTRUCTION

With the approval of the concerned provincial ministries (ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche, ministère de l'Environnement) and the municipality of Lennoxville, a 35 metre dyke was constructed and a corrugated steel structure with removable stoplogs was installed on the site in October 1990. The project became fully operational in the spring of 1991.



## HABITAT USE

Waterfowl were immediately attracted to this project. Mallards, Blue-winged Teal and Wood Ducks were sighted in the spring and two broods of Mallards were raised here during the summer of 1991. A change in vegetation types attractive to waterfowl is expected with Pondweed, Smartweed, Spikerush, Duckweed and Arrow-head already being observed here. These plants and the invertebrate life forms which they attract will provide important food sources for waterfowl and other marsh dwellers such as Red-winged Blackbird, Bobolink, Swallows, Great Blue Heron, Killdeer and Wilson's Plover which have been observed here. Muskrat, deer, hare and other mammals are known to frequent the area.



## MANAGEMENT

### A) UPLANDS

The hay field under agreement will be left uncut until the first of July in any year in order to provide long-term nesting habitat for waterfowl. After that date, the fields will be mown to maintain the hayland as good quality nesting habitat.

This management of the upland cover is expected to greatly favour waterfowl nesting success by establishing a control over nest destruction by machinery and by maintaining good nesting cover adjacent to the wetland to reduce the risk of predation as broods move from the nest to the wetland.



### B) WETLAND

The water control structure will ensure that the water depth on the wetland is kept at an average of 60 cm. Water levels may periodically be changed depending on the response of vegetation in the marsh and in order to maintain good conditions for brood-rearing. Such operations may eventually include a full drawdown to help rejuvenate the wetland and help establish new stands of emergent aquatic plants.



## FUTURE ORIENTATION

Bishop's University will use this project as a field laboratory and observation area. By arrangement with Bishop's University, interested groups will be able to visit the site for interpretation purposes. These activities will be kept at a minimum during the pairing and nesting periods in order to avoid disturbing the birds at that critical time and to ensure a good nesting success.



Regular field inspections by Ducks Unlimited Canada personnel will ensure that the project continues to operate well and to the benefit of its many users, dwellers and visitors.



Note on the landowner

**BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY**

All projects established by Ducks Unlimited Canada are dependent upon the interest and cooperation of the landowner. In addition to generously providing the use of the land for the Peter D. Curry Conservation Project, the directors, faculty and staff of the University have shown remarkable cooperation in the various phases of this project. From controlling access to organizing prescribed mowing as well as providing helpful information and assistance, the continued interest and cooperation of the Bishop's community is, and will continue to be essential for Ducks Unlimited in the management of this project.

Ducks Unlimited Canada wishes to thank the Board of Directors of Bishop's University for its support of this project, and to extend special thanks to the following members of the Bishop's community:

Dr. Hugh Scott, Principal

Dr. Donald F. J. Hilton, Chairperson, Dept. of Biology

in recognition of their valuable assistance and remarkable enthusiasm in helping to make this project a reality and for their assistance with the organization of the dedication ceremony. Special thanks are also extended to:

Mr. Peter Kambour, Director of Buildings & Grounds, for his assistance during the construction phase of the project,

and to:

Mr. Bruce Stevenson, Director, Alumni and Public Relations,

Mrs. Jocelyne Colvert, Executive Secretary, Principal's Office,

and to:

Mrs. Diane Nills, Faculty Secretary,

for their assistance in the organization of the dedication ceremony.



Note on the donor

PETER D. CURRY

This project would not have been possible without the generous financial support provided by Mr. Peter D. Curry. Mr. Curry is an alumnus of Bishop's University (1931-1934) and has been a long-time member of Ducks Unlimited Canada. This project is a tribute to Mr. Curry's commitment to conservation and education.

