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## NATURAL HERITAGE AWARD

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Good stewardship means the responsible use of land in a way that balances economic, social and environmental values for the common good of society and the environment. The Natural Heritage Stewardship award recognizes good land stewardship by private property owners and commercial developments in Muskoka. It acknowledges the protection of the natural heritage of Muskoka and recognizes the voluntary commitment to good stewardship practices.

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### CRITERIA – SHORELINE/RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

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THIS CATEGORY IS FOR SHORELINE PROPERTIES, RURAL OR URBAN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, OR UNDEVELOPED RURAL PROPERTIES.

(S: SHORELINE PROPERTIES, RS: RURAL/RESIDENTIAL/SHORELINE)

- S - Is the area back from the shore well treed? Is there a range of tree species and sizes appropriate to the site? Are the species native to Muskoka?
- S - Is the water's edge undisturbed (i.e. no retaining wall, no artificial sand beaches, no or minimal lawn, native shoreline vegetation)?
- S - Is lot development (docks, boathouses, decks, accessory buildings, gazebos, parking lots, bunkies, etc) minimal?
- S - If there is a septic system does it meet current standards? If there is an outhouse, is it located well back from water (at least 30 m with gradient away from lake)?
- S - If there is a dock, is it floating, cantilevered, suspension or pipe/pile? If the dock is a crib dock, do the cribs occupy a small footprint (i.e. less than 15 sq m)? Is there a low dock to shoreline ratio?
- RS - Are there minimal impervious surfaces? (ie. are the walkways etc. made of wood chips, pea gravel, or wooden slats spaced well apart so that rainfall can soak into the soil?)
- RS - Is there dark sky friendly lighting?
- RS - Does the design and colour of the buildings harmonize with the natural environment?
- RS - Is there a good understory and natural ground cover on the property? Is lawn cover minimal? Are natural lawn management methods are being used?
- RS - Has there been restoration done by planting of native trees and shrubs or removal of invasive plant species?



- RS - Has there been sustainable forest management or habitat management for wildlife (i.e. wetland management, natural pond creation, habitat restoration, bird/bat houses)?
- RS - Has the owner entered into a conservation easement or some other form of land protection agreement? Are conservation efforts evident (e.g. rain barrels, solar panels, lawn mower type)?

## CRITERIA – COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

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THIS CATEGORY IS FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES AND MAY INCLUDE RESORTS, BUSINESSES, TOURIST ESTABLISHMENTS, OR PUBLIC PROPERTIES. AWARD MAY BE GIVEN TO A SPECIFIC COMPONENT OF THE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY.

- Have a variety of native species been used in restoration or rehabilitation of sites, including post-construction? Have native species and natural areas been “saved” during site development?
- Have areas been set aside as nature reserves or constrained from development? Are these areas well treed with native species suited for the site?
- Have there been any attempts at restoration of degraded sites on the property?
- Is there minimal lawn? Is natural lawn management used?
- If the property is located on a shoreline, is the shoreline maintained in a natural state, with native species?
- Did the development incorporate natural elements of the site in the design (i.e. did they use natural features as design elements such as ponds, wetlands, rock outcrops, forested areas, shoreline areas, etc). Is biodiversity well-incorporated into undeveloped areas?
- Has there been improved stormwater treatment – is the treatment been above and beyond the legal requirements? Do the treatment facilities blend or complement the natural environment (i.e. grassed swales, ponds that are naturalized rather than rip rap)?
- Are there minimal impervious surfaces (i.e. are the walkways etc. made of wood chips, pea gravel, or wooden slats spaced well apart so that rainfall can soak into the soil)?
- Did dark sky friendly lighting get used?
- Do the septic facilities/sewage treatment facilities meet current standards or have been upgraded, or is the site on municipal services?
- Are there examples of good stewardship practices ie. composting, rain barrels, solar panels, education or nature programs, appropriate docking such as pole docks, restricted vehicular access?