

# Money well spent

## Conservation groups can always use your support

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I did something a little subversive a few Christmases ago while working in West Prince County, P.E.I. It has to do with the spirit of giving, which grips us this time of year. Around now we flood our local food banks and even hold turkey drives so that our fellow human beings, regardless of income, can enjoy a proper Christmas dinner. It's heartening stuff and moreover, it's money well spent.

But three years ago I took a different approach with my donations. Of course, I did my part for the food banks, but damned if I'm not a tree-hugger. I began looking into the larger conservation organizations like the World Wildlife Fund, but as important as their work might be, I knew my money wouldn't be used locally. I wanted something closer to home.

Finally, I approached my local watershed groups — those responsible for the health of nearby rivers, as well as the fish they contain. There had been a significant number of fish kills in recent years and these locals did the heavy lifting when it came to preventing more. So I called the



The endangered Blanding's turtle is among the species at risk monitored by the Mersey Tobecatic Research Institute. Zack Metcalfe moment the Nova Scotia Salmon Association is restoring West River Sheet Harbour to a more natural state, salmon and all. In so doing they're building a blueprint for other rivers hoping to follow suit. By no means is this a complete list of the groups in need of your support. But they're the ones I've dealt with personally and who are high on my own list. If your priorities are similar to mine and you're in a position to help them along, I know they could use it.

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heavy lifting when it came to preventing more. So I called the Tignish Watershed Management Group and asked where to send the cheque. The woman on the other end of the phone was confused at first, then overjoyed. Turns out that in all their years, not once had they received such a donation. So unexpected was my contribution that the community's mayor personally delivered a Tignish Watershed t-shirt to my place of work.

Word got around and I felt obliged to donate again, this time to the Trout Unlimited Prince County Chapter so as to avoid favoritism. Small town politics, you understand, but in the end I was glad to make both. Few of us have enough money to back every organization we admire, but 'tis the season to dig a little deeper and conversation groups often don't make the cut.

In our fine province labours the Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation, working feverishly to prevent the extinction of the Atlantic whitefish, found nowhere else on Earth. There's the Mersey Tobearic Research Institute, pioneering our understanding of the biosphere occupying our province's southwest. I've personally held the animals nursed back to life at Hope For Wildlife, where the broken bones of numerous species are set to heal. At this very