

“Science, Art and Politics: Bill Mason’s contribution to the environmental movement”

Bill Mason was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1929. A legendary Canadian canoeist, an award-winning artist, and one of the most successful filmmakers in the history of the National Film Board of Canada, Bill Mason’s larger-than-life story continues to awe and inspire. His documentary on the plight of wolves in the [fill in years] in Canada, *Death of a Legend*, inspired a public outcry against a then-common policy of killing wolves with poisoned bait, forcing the government to re-evaluate its actions.

His infectious love of nature and its magnificent portrayal through the camera lens inspired Canadians to rediscover our own surrounding, giving us a new sense of ownership over “our” backyard. His films (*Paddle to the Sea*, *Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes*, *Path of the Paddle*) have made the wilderness experience – canoeing, camping, a rite of passage for many Canadians. Making us fall in love with his subject, Bill instilled a love and dedication to protect the fragile natural beauty that surrounds us.

But his goal was never to be a mere promoter of the outdoor lifestyle. Rather, he wanted us to channel our attachment to our surrounding into concrete and conscientious political will. The environment is not just something beautiful to remember, but a necessary resource to protect and manage sustainably, ensuring its survival for future generations.

In 1968 Bill Mason asked his next door neighbour, Ken Buck, to help film and edit documentaries for the National Film Board of Canada. From there developed both a collaboration and a friendship that continues to inspire Ken to promote the environmental awareness that became their joint cause.

On Friday, November 17th, at 7:30 pm we will have the privilege of having Ken Buck take us on a tour of Bill Mason’s studio. By explaining how an artist became a teacher and a catalyst for environmental change Ken will show us, science teachers, the multifaceted nature of our own work. This presentation will challenge us to build a scientifically literate and politically active generation that will not only be attached to the Canadian wilderness, but will also have the knowledge and the know-how to protect it!

Perhaps like the legendary Bill Mason you will also feel inspired to raise the environmental consciousness of those around you – whether it be the 15-year-old in the second row or the 40-something at your dinner table!

We strongly encourage both members and non-members to attend this free presentation and be challenged by an inspirational love story of an artist and his surroundings. Donations for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) will be collected at the presentation. CPAWS is a non-profit wilderness protection organization whose work ranges from educational campaigns to pressuring policy makers to protect our wildlife heritage.