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NATIONAL
WATER
CENTRE

Artists, icons gather in Saint John for first look at the National Water Centre programs

CENTRE WILL “CELEBRATE WATER IN OUR CULTURE” SAY FOUNDERS

Highlights

- Gord Downie, Edward Burtynsky among artists who gathered in Saint John today to open the National Water Centre
- The Centre will attract leaders from Canadian arts, including musician/writer Dave Bidini in October
- All Canadians will soon be able to register their personal water stories (“watermarks”) in a digital archive
- RBC Blue Water Project recognized as the founding supporter of the National Water centre

(SAINT JOHN, September 19, 2014) - Canadian culture-makers gathered in Saint John, New Brunswick, today to announce the first season of programming at the National Water Centre.

Among the group of 40 community leaders who gathered Friday afternoon to kick off the Centre’s first season were: musician **Gord Downie**, filmmaker **Jennifer Baichwal**, photographer **Edward Burtynsky**, environmental lawyer **Mark Mattson**, and business leaders **Colin Krulicki** of RBC and **Alex Kennedy** of Lafarge.

Mark Mattson, founder, announced that the National Water Centre will focus on two areas of programming in 2014 -2015: a series of summits and the *Watermark Project*.

“Our programs are built on the belief that some waterbody, somewhere, is part of every Canadian. It shaped them. It made them who they are,” says Mark Mattson, founder of the National Water Centre.

“The National Water Centre’s mission is to help people discover their personal connection to water. We call that your *watermark*. Discovering your watermark is the



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first step to ensuring you –and all Canadians –have a swimmable, drinkable, fishable future,” says Mattson.

NATIONAL WATER CENTRE SUMMITS TO BRING ARTISTS TO SAINT JOHN

A series of **summits** will bring notable Canadian artists to Saint John. **Dave Bidini** will host a writers’ summit October 16-19 with **Todd Babiak**, **Dani Couture**, and **Terry Ryan**. Two-time Pulitzer Prize and Emmy winning photojournalist **Barbara Davidson** will host a summit for journalists. Canadian filmmaker **Phil Hoffman** will host a summit for documentary filmmakers. Painter **Michael Adamson** will host the visual artists’ summit later this season.

“We’ll find creative, exciting people in art and culture and bring them together to explore the connection between art and place. We’ll talk about the challenges facing Canadian waterways and the communities they flow through. It feels like the start of something powerful,” says musician and poet **Gord Downie**.

Guests participating in summits at the Centre will be given tours of the local watershed by Fundy Baykeeper, **Matt Abbott**.

WATERMARK PROJECT ANNOUNCED

The Centre’s other major initiative is the *Watermark Project*. It will be a web-based archive designed to collect and share Canadians’ personal water stories. The *Watermark Project* guides people through the process of discovering and shaping their personal water story so that they can better understand the importance of water in their own lives.

Downie, Mattson, and the filmmakers behind *Watermark* developed the program after a screening of the documentary in Saint John last December.

“When I was asked about my most powerful memory of water in Saint John, I was stumped for a minute. I’d spent the last three years travelling the world with Ed and



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Nick examining other people's water stories, but I had not thought about my own. That moment was a turning point for me and, if we can re-create it across the country, I think it will be a turning point for Canada, too," says **Jennifer Baichwal**, co-director of *Watermark*.

FOUNDING SUPPORTER, RBC BLUE WATER PROJECT, RECOGNIZED

The founding supporter of the National Water Centre's first season is the RBC Blue Water Project. They spoke at the launch and announced a \$100,000 donation.

"Water is one of our most precious resources. Everything we do depends on it," said Colin Krulicki, Regional Vice-President, Western New Brunswick. "We believe that access to water will be one of the most significant environmental and economic issues facing the world in the coming years. We are confident that the National Water Centre will become a catalyst in bringing together leaders to collaborate and protect water across the country."

SUPPORTER, LAFARGE, RECOGNIZED

Representatives from Lafarge showcased their contribution to the Centre – a brand new entrance laneway with increased parking for Centre guests. Lafarge reconstructed the 1-km laneway, which is designed to minimize runoff during rain and snow melt and did not require the removal of any trees or habitat on the mostly-forested property.

"Lafarge is committed to a more swimmable, drinkable, fishable Canada, and we're a proud supporter of the National Water Centre and the role it will play in the celebration of water in Canadian culture," said Bob Cartmel, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lafarge Canada Inc. "Our mission is focused on building better cities and communities, and we were delighted to contribute a new roadway to the Centre. In doing so, we were able to construct a laneway that avoided impacting the local habitat found on the property."



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EDWARD BURTYNSKY DEDICATES RARE WORK

At the launch announcement, photographer Edward Burtynsky unveiled his donation to the National Water Centre: a rare 60" x 80" work. The piece will be on display in the salon year-round.

"With over 30% of world's freshwater, Canada is a water nation. It is up to us and to our leaders to understand and manage this precious resource. By launching the National Water Centre in Saint John today, we give hope to the coming generations. We are letting them know that we not only care about the future of Canada's water, we are doing something to protect it," says photographer **Edward Burtynsky**.

FOUNDERS ROOM UNVEILED

Also unveiled was a new "Founders' Room." This dining room is dedicated to the individuals and institutions who will be invited to join the National Water Centre's "Founders' Circle" in recognition of their pledges to support the Centre's first season of programming. It is anticipated that the Room will honour individuals including **Mark Mattson (Founder) and Nora Osbaldeston, Krystyn Tully (Founder) and Dylan Neild, Blair and Kathy McKeil, Britt and Craig, Edward Burtynsky, Glenn Isaac, Gord Downie, Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier, Karen and Kevin Lowe, Ken and Tasha Irving, Lauren Brown, Matthew Abbott, Meredith Brown, Michael McSweeney, Philippe Savoy, Rob Cross, Rob Steele, Steven Joyce, and Susan Schaefer.**

RBC Blue Water Project and **Lafarge** are recognized as Founding Supporters.

ABOUT

The National Water Centre is the country's first centre dedicated to the celebration of water in Canadian culture. The centre promotes swimmable, drinkable, fishable water through community-building, information sharing, research, and leadership development.

The launch is supported by the RBC Blue Water Project, a 10-year global charitable



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commitment of \$50 million launched in 2007 to help provide access to clean water now and for future generations.

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