The Heritage Resources Centre (HCR) is based in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. The Centre is dedicated to promoting research, education, and information exchange, among those concerned with heritage in the broad, natural, and cultural, sense. The Centre’s Outreach Program strives to facilitate interaction among persons and groups involved with heritage at local, regional, national, and international, levels in the public and private sectors and among interested citizens more generally. Activities at the Centre encompass geological, biological, archaeological, cultural, historical, marine, and geographical, aspects of heritage, as well as policies and institutions for heritage management and planning. The notion of heritage includes also the ideas, beliefs, and ways of life, that people value and use in the face of change.

The Outreach Program includes conferences and workshops, as well as round-tables and fora, organized for the University community and those active in local agencies and groups. Conferences are major events which last several days and normally involve a hundred or more people, many presentations, much discussion, and finally the publication of proceedings. A recent example is a conference on Ecological Integrity and the Management of Ecosystems, which was organized in conjunction with the Canadian Parks Service. The Centre is currently involved in organizing the Fourth Annual Conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration, which is to be held in Waterloo in August 1992.

The workshops are also major events which last one or two days and typically involve 30–100 participants. In many cases, the workshops are organized in association with other groups or agencies. Each workshop generally involves a keynote address followed by presentations from a panel of persons representing a variety of perspectives, small-group sessions, and a plenary to summarize findings. The workshops are of three basic types and are central to the work of the Centre.

The first type are project workshops, which are organized as part of some research or inquiry that is being conducted by the Centre. Research projects are typically motivated by an interest in heritage management, in a cross-disciplinary way, on the part of graduate and undergraduate students and faculty members from the University of Waterloo and elsewhere. Recent examples include workshops on resource survey for coastal zone management along the Lake Huron shore, assessing environmental management in Canada and Europe, and examining the links between environmental assessment and heritage in Canada.

The other two types of workshops are certificate seminars and public workshops. Certificate seminars deal with issues of interest to professionals in the educational, government, and private, sectors. A recent example was a seminar on Grasslands Management, which was held in Saskatchewan in June 1991 in conjunction with the University of Regina. The seminar included a forum on conservation strategies for grasslands, and an extensive field-trip. Participants were awarded a certificate of grasslands management. Forthcoming certificate seminars have been organized with Wildlife Habitat Canada on Understanding, Planning, and Managing, Wetlands (November 1991) and Landscape Planning and Management (January 1992).

The public workshops focus on issues of interest or concern to the wider community and involve professionals and citizens. Recent workshops of this type examined the Canadian UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme, planning for the Grand River in Ontario, and the conversion of rail-lines to hiking and biking trails. Upcoming workshops are to focus on Environmental Assessment and Heritage in Ontario, Heritage Practice in Canada, and Greenways for Ontario.

The Outreach Program is associated with a publication series that includes books, workshop proceedings, videos, papers, and technical reports, arising from the work of the Centre. Recent publications include Signposts to a Better Future: Environmental Assessment and Heritage in Canada, A Study of Ontario Volunteer Environmental Stewardship, Strengthening Biosphere Reserves in Canada, An Analysis of the Historical Interactions of Humans and Polar Bears in the Canadian Arctic 2000 BC to AD 1935, and Marine, Lake and Coastal Heritage.

Through its activities, the Heritage Resources Centre strives to provide fora for information exchange, discussion, and learning, in a non-adversarial way. In this sense, it is becoming recognized as an important node for developing pluralistic and cooperative foci for environmental management and planning in Canada and internationally. Those interested in receiving a publications list, or in becoming better acquainted or involved with the work of the Centre, are encouraged to contact the Information Officer.

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