

*March 5, 2004*

## **Outstanding conservationists awarded Order of the Bighorn**

*Edmonton...* Five of Alberta's fish and wildlife champions are being honoured for their exceptional efforts to promote wise use of our fisheries and wildlife resources.

Mike Cardinal, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, announced the names of those chosen as inductees into the Order of the Bighorn, Alberta's most prestigious wildlife conservation award.

Garry Hackler (Cowley), Ed Scarlett (Edmonton), Ryk Visscher (Edmonton), Donald Andersen (Rocky Mountain House) and Canadian Forces Base Suffield (Medicine Hat) are being inducted into the Order.

They will be honoured for their work at a banquet in Edmonton. The reception is being hosted and co-sponsored by the Alberta government, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc., Ducks Unlimited Canada, Luscar Ltd. and TransCanada Pipelines.

"Those we've chosen as members of the Order have shown great commitment to protecting Alberta's fish and wildlife for many years," said Minister Cardinal. "Their work has benefited the province and Albertans."

The Alberta government established the Order of the Bighorn in 1982 to recognize outstanding contributions to fish and wildlife conservation by individuals, organizations and corporations. Including the five awards being presented today, 87 of the honours have been awarded since the Order was established.

### **2004 Alberta Order of the Bighorn**

#### **Recipients**

#### **Ryk Visscher (*Edmonton*)**

When people think of hunting, they often think of Ryk Visscher, past president of the Alberta Professional Outfitters Society.

For many years, Ryk has worked to promote ethics in hunting and enhance the image of hunters and the role they play in conserving wildlife. He has also developed and

delivered mentor programs for a number of wildlife organizations, to introduce youth and first-time hunters to hunting in a positive way.

His early interest in bowhunting led him to present a bowhunter education program, and to publish the first-ever *Bowhunting Records of Alberta*, published annually since 1983. He was director of the Alberta Bowhunters Association for more than 25 years.

Ryk established his own outfitting company in 1989. He has been featured on many TV and radio programs about hunting, and his magazine articles about the sport have appeared in a variety of outdoor publications.

Ryk has supported and participated in projects with many wildlife organizations, including the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, Report A Poacher, Hunting for Tomorrow Foundation, Alberta Fish and Game Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.