

Qilak Award to Doug Cunningham

As an educator at Bruce Peninsula District Secondary School, Doug's enthusiasm for the sciences, particularly astronomy, was infectious, and many of his pupils won local and national science fair awards.

Doug embraced protection of our dark skies, and the importance of maintaining their natural integrity, and he has been invited to speak on the subject at many public events across Grey and Bruce Counties and other jurisdictions. His "dark skies" advocacy really caught public attention, and the Bruce Peninsula is now one of this country's most valued dark-sky locations.

After Doug retired, he was able to devote more energy to spreading the word about astronomy and dark skies, and got not only local politicians on board, but also provincial and federal representatives. Working with the Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association, a public outreach program was put in place, a special observation platform was built at Lion's Head, and a university student was hired each summer to manage the weekly program of talks and observing. In the three years the program has been in place, several thousand people have now been treated to dark-sky observation, and awareness of the importance of the preservation of these dark skies.

Doug's importance as a champion of astronomy and dark-sky preservation programs is inestimable. His enthusiasm and unceasing work have ensured that entire communities are now on board and actively taking part in dark-sky preservation.

I am pleased to offer Doug Cunningham of Lion's Head, Ontario, as my nominee for the Society's Qilak Award.