HEADER FOR WEB ENTRY

***GRAY’S ECOLOGY CORNER***

Gray Merriam is a retired professional ecologist. He worked for 40 years in ecological research and teaching in Ontario, New York state, central Texas, central Sweden, the Netherlands and consulted for the Nordic Council on Ecology, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in Australia, the Netherlands Research Institute for Nature Management, The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences Institute for Wildlife Ecology, the University of Oslo. Norway and the National University of Rosario, Argentina.

Gray has held appointments at Carleton, Cornell, the University of Texas, Acadia University, Canadian Wildlife Service, Utah State University and Warsaw University. He received the Latornell Conservation Pioneer Award,

a DSc from Moncton University, a Distinguished Scholar Award from the International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE), the Quinney Visiting Scholarship from Utah State University, the Distinguished Landscape Ecologist Award from the U.S. Section of IALE, the CUASA Scholarly Achievement Award and the Standard Oil Award as best instructor in science at the University of Texas, Austin. At Carleton University he served as Chair of the Department of Biology and Director of the Ottawa-Carleton Institute of Biology. He retired as Professor Emeritus. Gray successfully directed 13 PhD research students and 25 MSc research students. He published about 100 peer-reviewed papers in international ecological journals.

Gray’s interest in ecology began, before the word was common when he grew up in rural Ontario in the headwaters area of the Credit River. He earned an Honours degree in wildlife biology at Guelph when it was still a college of the University of Toronto. He did Doctoral studies at Cornell University in Ithaca , New York and in that work invented the idea of tracking moving animals by attaching radios to them. Now the widespread methods of radiotelemety. Because of that work, he was invited back to Cornell as a Visiting Scientist after earning his degree to pursue more work in radiotelemetry marking woodchucks (Marmota monax). After 8 years at the main campus of the University of Texas in Austin, gray returned to Ontario with a young family in order to avoid the politics of the Viet Nam war.

Back in Ottawa, Gray and his students developed a research program relating population ecology to the ecological effects of a heterogeneous landscape mosaic such as the farmland mosaic around Ottawa. That new form of ecology was popular in Europe where landscape ecology had been related largely to urban planning. The relationship of the landscape mosaic to the dynamics of wildlife and plant populations was a fresh approach in the U.S. and was accepted energetically. So, the work of this lone Canadian group was a leader in the development of a fresh form of ecology of landscape mosaics under human influences in North America. Gray was the only Canadian contributing to a workshop held in Illinois in 1983 which introduced this new form of landscape ecology to the U.S. Looking back on that development from 2007, Wiens, et al. assembled Foundation Papers in Landscape Ecology and included two foundation papers from Gray’s group.

In his retirement, on the Salmon River in eastern Ontario, Gray tried to communicate some of his knowledge to non-academics. To the people on the land who, after all, are the ones shaping our landscapes. In 2005 he published *Discovering Natural Processes* along with Jeff Amos . In 2006, he contribute half the chapters to The Salmon River Watershed (Ristvedt, Ed.) In 2010, he coauthored *Special Places in Canada* with Aileen Merriam and Jeff Amos, In 2011 he edited *The Naturally Rich Frontenacs,*  In 2016 with Aileen Merriam, he published *Here and There*, In 2012 he published *Rivers of Natural Riches,*  In 2020, he published *Caring for Our Homeplace.* Gray also Served as Founding President of the Friends of the Salmon River, as Chair of the Frontenac Stewardship Council, as ecological advisor to the Kennebec Lake Association. He received a Latornell Conservation Pioneer Award and was named Green Cottager across Canada by Cottage Life Magazine in 2009.

Gray knows the land in eastern Ontario. He grew up on the moraine where Halton County abuts Wellington County and attended S.S. # 14 Esquesing when it had only 7 students in all 8 grades. Gray’s early years were spent whenever possible out on the land. An early summer job with the, then, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests (1954) was doing all the basic biological inventory work on Conroy Marsh where the York, Little Mississippi and Madawaska Rivers come together near Combermere. The essay *Tales from the Marsh* tells that tale. For several summers, Gray worked as part of a crew mapping and describing all the wooded areas in the watersheds of proposed Conservation Authorities including the Rocky Saugeen, the Speed, the Eramosa and the Maitland. Also for the Ontario Department of Planning and Development, he did an experimental river improvement project on Fisher Mill Creek in the Grand watershed. Although he spent 8 years in the wilds of Central Texas, Gray returned to eastern Ontario and has spent over 30 years here as a professional ecologist and, in retirement, as a citizen conservationist and author. Whenever work permitted, Gray and Aileen have explored much of Canada, especially the rivers of the Moose watershed, by canoe. Many of those trips are recounted in a work underway tentatively titled *Learning from the Land.*